

**PART EIGHT**

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# THE GREAT WAR... **I WAS THERE!**

**UNDYING MEMORIES OF 1914-1918**

Edited by  
**SIR JOHN  
HAMMERTON**

Editor of  
**WORLD WAR 1914-1918**

Writer of  
**FORGOTTEN MEN**  
*The Famous War Film*

**MANY HUNDREDS OF  
UNPUBLISHED PHOTOS**





## LITERARY CONTENTS OF THIS PART With Acknowledgements to Authors and Publishers

WEEK by week we acknowledge here our indebtedness to the many authors and publishers without whose courteous permission to reprint selected pages from the books written and published by them the compilation of the present work could not have been achieved. In our volumes as finally bound these acknowledgements will be repeated in the preliminary pages.

57. **WHAT HAPPENED TO ME AT 'PLUG STREET'**  
from RIFLEMAN AUBREY SMITH'S "Four Years on the Western Front"  
*By permission of the London Rifle Brigade and Mrs. Bowes-Smith*
58. **TERRIER'S FIRST BLOOD IN SODDEN FIELDS**  
from WILLIAM LINTON ANDREWS'S "The Haunting Years"  
*By permission of the Author*
59. **HEARTBREAK BATTLE**  
from WILFRED FWART'S "Scots Guard"  
*Publishers: Rich & Cowan, Ltd., 37, Bedford Square, W.C.1  
By permission of Mr. John Gawsforth*
60. **AT THE CRACK OF DAWN**  
from LT. HAROLD ROSHER'S "In the Royal Naval Air Service"  
*Publishers: Chatto & Windus, 40, Chandos Street, W.C.2  
By permission of Mr. Frank Roshier*

61. **MY LAST HOURS IN THE IRRESISTIBLE**  
By L.-CORPL. POWELL  
*Specially contributed*
62. **THROUGH DEATH VALLEY WITH THE ANZACS**  
By PRIVATE FRED FOX  
*Specially contributed*
63. **DAUNTLESS IN THE FACE OF DEATH**  
from MAJOR A. H. MURE'S "With the Incomparable 29th"  
*Publishers: W. & R. Chambers, Ltd., 38, Soho Square, W.1*
64. **MY OWN DARK HOURS**  
from GEN. SIR IAN HAMILTON'S "Gallipoli Diary"  
*Publishers: Edward Arnold & Co., 41, Maddox Street, W.1  
By permission of Sir Ian Hamilton*

## Leaves from the Editor's Note-Book

John Carpenter House, London, E.C.4

**F**OLLOWING upon the publication of our first two Parts, there has been so great a flood of letters, appreciative and enquiring, that it has strained the resources of the Editorial office almost to the limits. These letters are in three main groups: those which express keen and warm appreciation of THE GREAT WAR: I WAS THERE! as reviving and amplifying their own memories of the Great War; those which identify either the writers or their friends in some particular illustration or chapter in our work; and those which offer to add to our list and stock of actual personal experiences of the war. All three groups are equally welcome to me; but it is only letters of the first two groups upon which I can comment in this Note-Book.

**I**N last week's Note-Book I was able to quote and comment upon two extremely interesting personal identifications, both of them from men who fought at Mons. A third case comes from another Mr. Carter, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, who, as he says, "was greatly surprised to see a photograph of my father on p. 31, soldiers marching through a French village, under the heading 'The Men Who Sang.'" This, of course, was chosen as an illustration, which at the time I thought excellent, of the habit of the British soldier of singing lustily on the march, and it went very well with Mr. Curnock's article describing how he first heard "It's a Long, Long Way to Tipperary" as a marching song. Mr. Carter's father was one of the first of the Old Contemptibles, and he belonged to the same regiment, the Middlesex, as the other Mr. Carter, who has recognized himself as the young sentry at Mons in p. 23 of Part I.

**A**PPRECIATIONS of my new publication are so many and sincere that it is hardly possible to make a choice, and I will not bore my readers with them. They have supported me so enthusiastically that it is not necessary to tell them what they already know. They will, however, be interested, I am sure, when I tell them that their appreciation is, in fact, so wholehearted that it has strained even the great resources of the Printing Department of the Amalgamated Press. The general trend of the letters is to the effect that the writers find THE GREAT WAR: I WAS THERE! of compelling interest because "they were there."

**O**NE example may perhaps show how keen and vivid still is the interest in those tense days of twenty-four years ago. Among the many telephone calls which we have received was one from an Old Contemptible who, having seen our special double-page picture map of the whole retreat from Mons which I printed in Part 2, has been inspired to make a personal visit by car covering again the ground shown in that map. This is putting appreciation into practice in a most delightfully direct fashion, and as this is ground over which I had been quite recently myself, our friend may be assured that if he mentions my new publication in Mons and other places on the Retreat he will receive a genuine welcome.

**O**NE of the officers who was himself in the Mons Retreat (he wishes to remain unnamed) discusses with the interest natural to one who underwent the extreme exhaustion and strain of that Retreat Mr. Machen's article in Part 2, where, it will be remembered, he gave the "True Story of the Angels of Mons." He does not, of course, doubt that the story may be faithfully attributed to Mr. Machen's fancy. But he points out that a considerable number of the men were then suffering from what a regimental doctor described as "the delirium of exhaustion" during the days from August 25

[Continued in page iii of this wrapper]



#### **DEATH AWAITS THE FOE UNWARY**

Distance and a brief lull in the interchange of fire led many an incautious man to come momentarily from the safety of cover in the line to fall a victim of the crafty sniper. In this photograph two men of the Royal Berks Regiment are shown engaged in sniping work, the sniper with his rifle at the ready above, and the observer below. The scene was enacted within a shattered building at Anton's Farm, near Ploegsteert Wood, in the spring of 1915.

*Imperial War Museum*



## WHEN WINTER CAME TO FLANDERS FIELDS

Left are members of the H.A.C. in a trench at Lindenhoeck in February 1915. For the moment the enemy guns are silent, and pipes and hot coffee are very comforting in the chill air of winter. Below are Territorials entraining for the front, with a stray dog that they have adopted. They are wearing the sheepskin coats that were not much used after the winter of 1914-15, for though they were comfortable in frosty weather, in wet weather they soon became sodden with rain and were but an encumbrance.

*Imperial War Museum and L.N.A.*



# WHAT HAPPENED to ME at 'PLUG STREET'

by Rifleman Aubrey Smith, M.M.



## HE TWICE WON THE M.M.

The gallant young rifleman who so graphically describes his experiences at "Plug Street" in February 1915, was awarded the Military Medal in August 1917 and a bar to the medal in November 1918. This photograph was taken just after he had received the second decoration.

*C. J. Summerfield*

**L**AST night [Feb. 3, 1915] we came to a barn, about three-quarters of a mile from the trenches, and I found myself billeted in a loft. After dark our section had to take up rations to a support-farm nearer the trenches. It was very dark, and it is marvellous that anyone can remember the route. Leaving a lane, we turned into a field (needless to say that all the way we trod in very thick mud) and sloshed along beside a wide ditch of water, which was the only thing I could see, except the outline of the man in front. Can't you picture it? Field after field separated by ditches; occasionally we cross a small stream boarded by a couple of planks, and the party slows up to allow all to cross over; then on again. We turn to the left and tread through some water, but a flare goes up on the horizon and we are able to pick our way for a few seconds.

**A** MUDDY field, all glistening with water, and the outlines of short, stumpy trees are visible against the sky. We spot a narrow brick path, which we follow; and presently have to jump a stream. One man stumbles and the party has to wait for him; another, overburdened with a rather heavy sack, calls out "losing touch," and the pace is shortened. My package is a sack and a huge piece of bacon tied on top, which nestles confidently against my neck and hair and makes me feel I am not alone.

Soon we tread a very muddy turnip field and have to duck a piece of wire

overhead, which the first man discovered at the price of his hat. It is very interesting and weird and the flares serve to make it still more unusual. The flares go up frequently, sometimes three at a time. A few bullets whistle over our heads, but, strangely enough, we don't seem to notice them. At last we approach our destination—a dark farm.

We tread a cinder-path leading up to it and enter to see a platoon of men comfortably settled down there on straw, with a nice blazing fire. After depositing our loads we turn back, and, by this time, having grown more accustomed to the light, are able to see something of our path. I find that what I had taken to be a ditch of water, which I carefully avoided, is really a wet path.



## WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE!

The heavy rains that deluged the countryside of Flanders in the autumn and winter of 1914-15 added terribly to the misery and discomfort of the troops, as this chapter suggests. This photograph shows a man of the 2nd Scots Fusiliers near La Boutillerie doing his best to drain a flooded reserve trench with an improvised pump.

*Imperial War Museum*



and that a muddy bridge I had so gingerly trodden is several feet wide.

We arrived back and went to bed on straw, only to be awakened and told to put all equipment on and go to sleep in that attire. There have been a few shells flying overhead today and falling on some position far in our rear, and the noise does not seem at all alarming. It is a swishing sort of sound, ending in a huge explosion.

Some of our guns are quite near us, replying to the German fire.

#### BUSINESS AS USUAL

I HAD to go up to our trenches last night [Feb. 5] with a party who were carrying provisions, sandbags, etc. We halted at a little inn to get some of the things, and it was really funny to see the proprietor carrying on his business within a few hundred yards of the trenches, selling coffee and beer to the troops, with an incessant "pop-pop" of rifle fire going on outside." (Months afterwards we heard he had been shot as a spy, having had a secret telephone connected with the German lines.)

At this estaminet, known as the "Demi Lune," the party of us waited for some time for further stores to be brought up by a transport wagon. My bundle was a packet of a hundred sandbags, which was as much as I could manage, as they were loose and kept slipping. We advanced in single file up the lane, where the mud was not too terrible if you kept right in the middle. Presently my load began to drop in portions, and I had to keep picking the muddy sandbags up and shouldering them again, so that I got left behind. My discomfiture was increased by the amount of rifle fire that was going on, and the bullets kept hitting trees and walls by the wayside with as loud a crack as the shooting of them makes.

The flares seemed very close now, and I had not the least idea where to go. Fortunately, another of our men came along and helped me put my bundle together; he knew the way and told me the places where it was necessary to duck down. He said it was an unpleasant road for casualties from stray bullets, and I was very glad to be able to dump my load for a moment behind a barricade.

It is very nice listening to the British guns, which are very active round here. Now I understand all that is implied when the bulletins say that "Artillery duels have taken place." German aeroplanes come along occasionally and get fired at. You may see several puffs of smoke in the air, but in order to detect the aeroplane you have to look about a mile away and half a mile

higher. The guns on both sides don't seem to get the range in the air very easily. If the airman succeeds in locating the position of the guns we get shells whizzing over us intended for our batteries. Yesterday these shells fell in Ploegsteert and in the fields around, but the British did not reply much. Today our artillery has been very busy, without any reply so far from the enemy.

The firing-line is so different from my conception of it. The entire countryside is quite flat, consisting of green or ploughed fields, with groups of trees in the distance and lines of willows between the fields. Here and there are farmhouses, thatched cottages and small houses, and with the sun shining the panorama is a very placid and peaceful one. Except for the noise of firing and the "pop-pop" of the rifles, we might be in Kent!

This is the third day [Feb. 8, 1915] of our stay in billets [in Ploegsteert]. Sergt. (now Corpl.) Fulkes, Cox, Sweeting, Gernat and I are in a house in the village and have the front room to ourselves for sleeping and eating, and the people are very obliging. Fulkes and I speak French sufficiently to ask for all our wants. We have not been posted to our sections again yet, so Corpl. Miles and the others are in a billet farther down the street.

#### JUST LIKE HOME!

WHAT an absolute treat to sit down at a table again for a meal! We have our food cooked by the "landlady," who also makes tea and provides milk and won't hear of us using our enamelled plates and mugs or even our own knives and forks! No, she provides crockery and cutlery and washes up afterwards, and we feel quite at home. When back in civilized surroundings it is very funny how a hair on our plates worries us, whereas we swallowed all manner of things in the barn. We are most particular now about clean knives, and the butter we bought, which was so perfect in the barn, is recognized as white lard when surrounded by "tea-things."

The Army food is good and rations are plentiful; we can also buy almost anything in the village, but the "boutons noirs" have a reputation for possessing money and the shopkeepers charge them much more than they do the Regulars.

We marched [to Nieppe] to the baths yesterday, which we were very glad to have. They consist of huge tubs of hot water to hold about twelve men, and you have to drop down some distance from the top of the tubs to

the water. We got a complete set of clean underclothing, which did not necessarily fit us, and I changed mine with a big fat man who was in rather a fix. While we were in the baths our uniforms were "baked" in a kind of oven to disinfest them. On returning here, I went round with Wood to a deserted village school and played the piano for about half an hour; it was such a pleasure to touch one again.

LAST night Wood's landlady had made a fine boiled roly-poly jam pudding, and I asked the good wench at our billet to make one. Being of the peasant class, she had never made such a thing before and all signs and explanations were useless, as our French was not advanced enough to describe the recipe. Fulkes and I pointed to bread and pretended to roll out dough and spread jam and threw the imaginary pudding at the oven, but the woman only laughed.

#### BREASTWORKS ABOVE THE WATER

I HAVE only been on guard once. On that occasion one nervous sentry thought he saw something move, which was really a harmless dust-heap, and called us all out (the guard, I mean). It was rather exciting and we didn't grumble. The only person who grumbled was a man who had had some rum before retiring to bed and, on the command "Guard, turn out!" thought he was part of the guard and turned out with them! When we had gone some distance, he realized that it was a day or two before that he had been on guard.

This is my third day in the front-line breastworks, having left billets on the evening of the 9th, and we shall be relieved tonight. We came up by the lane past the "Demi Lune" estaminet which I described before, and, having got to the front-line trenches, filed along to the left until we got to some breastworks.

THE trench is so full of water here that these breastworks have been built on the ground. Ours is a long low bivvy, not very much above ground-level, made of sandbags, planks and earth, and well covered. It is divided into three compartments, each holding three men, or a portion of them—for our feet stick out in the open and the space is very limited.

We are in a big field and our trenches are on one side; to the right they are manned by our company for some few hundred yards and then the Essex Regiment continues the line onwards in the direction of Armentières. To our left is another breastwork, manned by our platoon, and beyond them there is



**'VERY NICE TO LISTEN TO'**

This remarkable photograph shows a British 60-pounder gun the instant after it had been fired, while it is at full recoil. Its deep boom would be most welcome to the men of whom the battery is in support, for as Rifleman Aubrey Smith says in this chapter, "It was very nice listening to the British guns." The 60-pounder was heavier than the guns of the Field Artillery, but sufficiently mobile to be moved up in support of infantry.

*Imperial War Museum*

a considerable space before the East Lancs trench begins at the outskirts of Le Gheer. Three hundred yards away is the German trench, which we observe through a periscope. The field itself is a mass of wet brown mud, without anything growing, but with thousands of cans and empty tins thrown about near the trenches.

All we do is to cook meals, read, write and keep guard. We start off with a sip of rum to warm us and then cook bacon as best we may on an improvised barrier deposited on a duck-board path behind our breastwork.

**Everything is done under difficulties, as we have to keep very low to avoid being seen, and from morn to night we are unable to straighten ourselves.**

The Germans appear to have superiority of fire, as regards musketry, in this part of the line. They have snipers posted and plenty of loopholes and keep up a constant fire all day long. "Ping-ping" we hear continually as they hit one object or another in the vicinity. It seems to be the aim of one sniper to reduce a certain house to ruins, as he keeps chipping off pieces of brick.

As for us, we keep silent. As far as I can see, the whole British line keeps silent and treats them with contempt. As a matter of fact, it would be difficult

to reply if we wanted to, as we haven't any loopholes and it would be madness to stand up and fire over the top. But the sniping doesn't do any good, except in so far as it forces us to lie low. At night time, unfortunately, he may work mischief, as the man on sentry-duty has to stand up for two hours and peer into the darkness.

On being relieved on the night of February 12, we made our way gaily down the Demi Lune Road, where a wagon was waiting to take our packs. Then we tramped along to the billets in Armentières. . . . That night we were awakened at midnight and had to put our kit together ready to move. Fortunately the whole thing was a false alarm.

This seems like a big military town in England, and the appearance of a French soldier is, of course, a rarity. The thing that strikes you most is the enormous number of motor lorries driven by the A.S.C. There is a long, straight road (from Nieppe) by these billets and sometimes the convoys extend as far as the eye can see and

continue to pass for a few minutes. Then you will see a company of very spick and span troops, who are obviously new arrivals, and there will be an almost unending line of horses being taken out for exercise in the other direction. In the streets you will see Hay's Wharf wagons, County Council conveyances, etc., and everything seems to be connected with the Army. "To the Follies," "A Cock Fight will be held in this Estaminet," etc., meet the eye, and menus are exhibited in more or less faulty English in some of the estaminets. . . .

**W**E are billeted in Ploegsteert [Feb. 22] again now and go in the trenches tonight. I must tell you about a digging fatigue we had on the 16th, when we were in the support farm again. Now that the mud is removed from my coat and trousers I can relate it without bad language. We arrived in the field of mud in which the front-line trench is situated about 8.30 p.m., having carried planks of wood up there from the estaminet. The night was dark, but we had to



**'PLUG STREET' MEANS 'MUD'**  
**TO MANY WHO REMEMBER IT**

"Some mud," the late Aubrey Smith of the London Rifle Brigade comments ruefully in his lively reminiscences in these pages. Left, a British officer resists the slime with stout gum-boots and layers of straw. Even cold water for a trench shave (above) was muddy; and below, a water-logged trench is laboriously baled out.

*Imperial War Museum and Photopress*

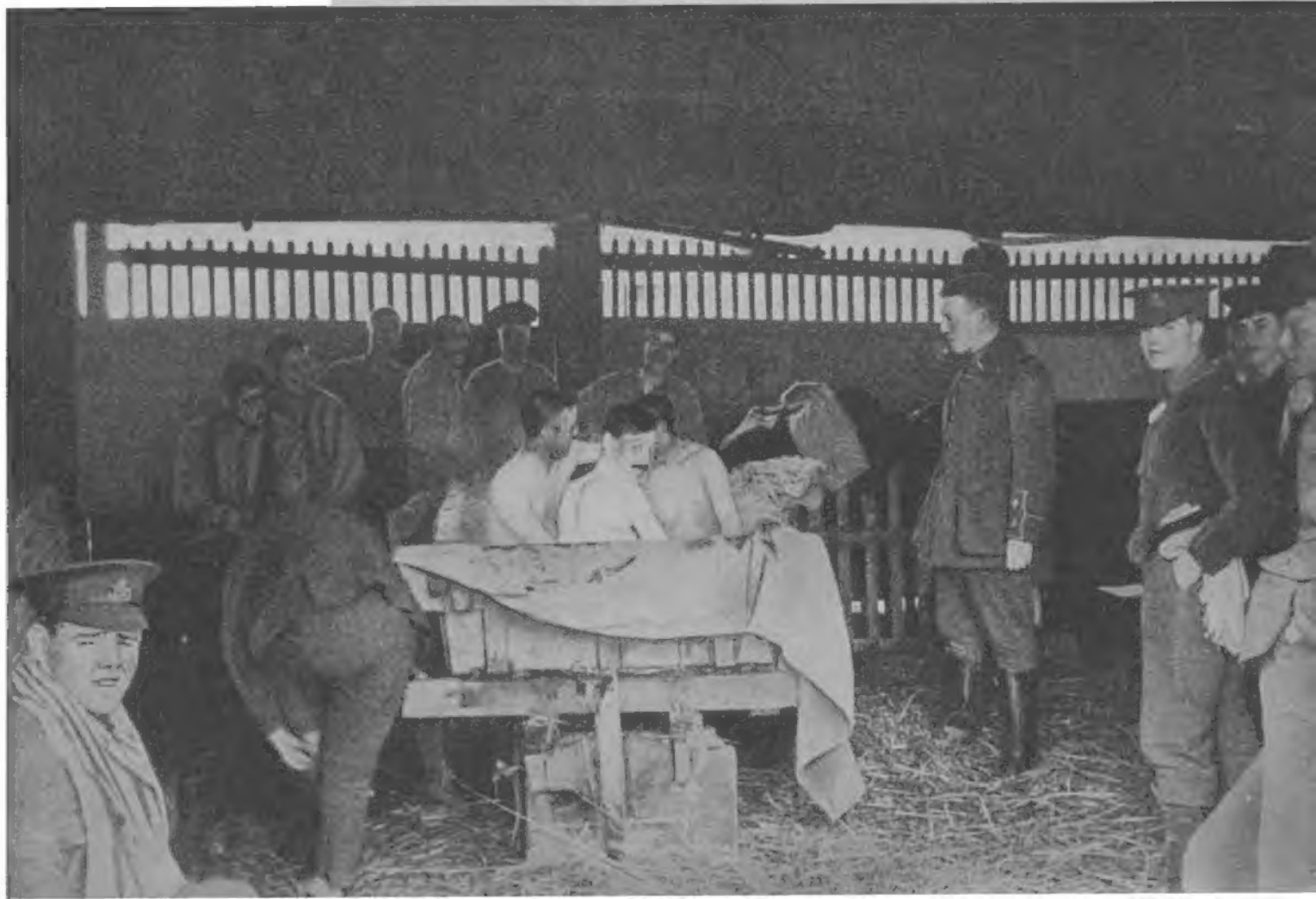




## BATH NIGHT CAME BUT ONCE A MONTH IN MUDDY FLANDERS

"Hard-bitten" describes these men in more than one sense, for the first and most important stage in Tommy's toilet was "de-lousing," one of the less savoury words added to the common vocabulary during the war. The right-hand photo shows a blanket-baking machine in which bed-clothes and uniforms are being disinfected. Meanwhile their owners, men of the 1/6th Battalion South Staffs Regiment (seen below), enjoy that rare luxury, a communal hot bath, in an old cart lined with tarpaulins. The water has been heated in biscuit tins.

*Photos, L.N.A. and Imperial War Museum*





#### FROM THAMESIDE TO YPRES

At the outbreak of war the transport of the British Expeditionary Force was inadequate, and lorries and vans of all kinds were commandeered. Here is a scene, such as Rifleman Smith describes in page 304, on the Ypres-Poperinghe road in October 1914 during the first battle of Ypres. A row of lorries which three months before were trundling along the streets of London are now in the maelstrom of war carrying supplies from railhead to the line.

*Photo by C. Pilkington in the Imperial War Museum*

stoop all the time, as we were working in the rear of the trench, filling sandbags, and if a flare went up we had to crouch right down in the mud.

Sandbags have to be filled with mud and water and, in the dark, the operation is a very awkward one, for half of each spadeful misses the bag and pours down the puttees and boots of the person holding it. The mud you stand in comes nearly to the top of the boots and is much deeper in places. We all wore our mackintosh capes, which are very spacious and reach almost to our feet, and, as we perpetually stooped, we kept tripping up and treading on the capes, which were soon as muddy inside as out. When I had dug a small hole it enabled me to sit in the mud

and put my feet and legs in the hole. After a number of bags were filled we had to carry them a distance of 150 yards to an emplacement on the right, stooping and wading through the slosh; we trod on turnips and slid off them, our feet turning right over in the mud, sometimes tripping up. This is all very well until a flare goes up.

**T**HEN you instantly flop down flat in the slosh and crouch for about twenty seconds. On you go again, stooping and treading on the mae, falling over turnips; another flare, another flop; then you feel yourself slipping and find yourself in a shell hole, knee-deep in mud and water, sprawling about against the slimy sides. Several swear words

follow, and you try to get out, but become tied up in the cape.

I fell in such a hole twice, and to put my hand anywhere on boots, puttees or trousers was to get it as slimy and dripping as when I sprawled in the mud. We left off the task at 11.30 and went to bed about half-past-midnight, very glad to rest our backs after the stooping. One man wearing waders or gum-boots had been digging for half an hour and found he had absolutely stuck in the mud and couldn't get out. The only way out was to withdraw his feet, stand on a bank in his socks and tug at the boots with his hands. But even this was too much for him, and another man had to come up and, with gloves on, they tore away the mud from the boots and eventually freed them. But this time the man who had come to the rescue found he had stuck and he also had to get out of his boots and dig them out. *Some mud! . . .*



## DEATH'S TOLL AT

### PLOEGSTEERT WOOD

During the earlier years of the war the graves of those who fell in action were only marked by a rough cross. Then specially designed crosses were erected, and finally came the uniform headstones such as those seen above at Underhill Farm, close to Ploegsteert Wood. Right, are some of the later wooden crosses.

One of these marks the grave of Captain the Hon. R. G. Morgan Grenville, who fell while leading a company of the Rifle Brigade at Ploegsteert Wood on December 19, 1914. His second in command, Captain the Hon. F. R. D. Prittie, took his place, but was also killed. They were buried side by side. Captain Morgan Grenville's body was later re-interred at Rifle House Cemetery, Warneton. Below, near a deserted farmhouse, close to Ploegsteert Wood, are some of the earlier wooden crosses

*Photos, A. J. Insall, copyright A.P. Ltd., and Photopress*





# TERRIER'S FIRST BLOOD in SODDEN FIELDS

by William Linton Andrews

**THE** author of this narrative was on the staff of the 'Dundee Advertiser' at the outbreak of war. He joined the 4th Territorial Battalion of the Black Watch. Magnificently does he describe the sensations of himself and his civilian chums when going with the Bareilly Brigade of the Meerut Division into the holocaust of Neuve Chapelle, their first taste of battle. Mr. Linton Andrews continued his journalistic career after the war and became editor of the 'Leeds Mercury'

**W**E felt honoured to think we had been chosen to serve in battle. Some of those who did not go to France till much later may think I am writing just the conventional journalistic phrase of the period. But no; we were eager to fight, to prove ourselves comrades and helpers to the Old Contemptibles, of whom we had heard so glorious a record, and our regular friends of the Indian Army. We were smarting to avenge the things said to us and to show that even a man with hairs on his chin might have no spot on his military record. We were eager to live up to the reputation of our famous regiment.

Later, before going into a charge, we generally shook hands and promised each other that the survivors would send messages to the bereaved. But nothing so mournful was in our mood then. We were excited and eager to do that for which we had joined the Army, our sworn duty. Moreover, there was the thrilling anticipation of being in at the great final victory of the war.

**V**AIN hope! Vain, ridiculous hope, as we see it now! In those days we thought we had but to break through the German front and the enemy, short of men, would crumple up. This was not the mere ignorant opinion of raw Territorial privates. It was the professed hope of the Army Commander. General Sir Douglas Haig, who, in a special order dated March 9, said:

## TO THE 1ST ARMY

We are about to engage the enemy under very favourable conditions. Until now in the present campaign the British Army has, by its pluck and determination, gained victories against an enemy greatly superior in men and guns.

Reinforcements have made us stronger than the enemy in our front. Our guns are now more numerous than the enemy's are, and are also larger than any hitherto used by any army in the field. Our Flying Corps has driven the enemy from the air.

We are now about to attack with about forty-eight battalions a locality in that front which is held by some three German bat-

talions. It seems probable, also, that for the first day of the operations the Germans will not have more than four battalions available for the counter-attack. Quickness of movement is therefore of first importance to enable us to forestall the enemy and thereby gain success without severe loss.

At no time in the war has there been a more favourable moment for us, and I feel confident of success. The extent of that success must depend on the rapidity and determination with which we advance.

To ensure success each one of us must play his part and fight like men for the honour of Old England.

We studied the message. "Three cheers!" said Nick. "We've done with trenches!"

"Yes, if we break through and get them on the run, and don't let them stop," said I sagely.

## IT SEEMED SO SIMPLE!

**W**E thought we saw it clearly. It was all so simple. We were to make a surprise attack with a battering-ram of men and guns, and once we had thrust it through the trench system the foe would be rolled up. Yes, rolled up. It was a favourite phrase then.

Later battles were more mysterious, and the private rarely knew what was happening except in his own bit of battlefield. He and a chum might get stuck in a reeking pit for a whole day and night and not know whether friend or foe was in that smashed trench fifty yards away. But we had a good idea at Neuve Chapelle of what we were after.

For one thing, the field of battle was tiny. My recollections may be wrong, but I think we expected to make a gap of only two miles or so. We had a very fair idea of the ground to be covered. We Territorials, eager for our first battle, studied it as much as we could.

Neuve Chapelle, which gave the battle its name, was a little village with a church and a brewery. It was close to the main road that ran from Estaires, which was in our hands, to cross-roads made by the rue de Bois, where lay a dug-out position we called Port Arthur, then across to the German front line,



HE WAS THERE IN 1915

The writer of this chapter served for three years in France and survived. In the foreword to his book he says that he wanted not to forget war but to remember his great-hearted comrades.

Photo, 'Leeds Mercury'

and so on to La Bassée, which was occupied by the Germans. Neuve Chapelle had changed hands several times in the autumn, and was held by the Germans from the beginning of November throughout the winter, making an awkward dent in our front line. Behind Neuve Chapelle, as we faced the enemy, lay a little wood, the Bois du Biez. The ground slowly rose towards the village of Aubers, and about nine miles beyond was the great city of Lille. Our object was to straighten out the salient, get to the high ground, especially at Aubers Ridge, and there command the approaches to the important manufacturing towns of Lille, Roubaix and Tourcoing.

We were hopeful enough to believe that on the night of the battle there would be cosy billets for us in Lille.

**B**UT even raw Territorials could see our task was none too easy. Our trenches were only for temporary shelter. We never meant to settle in them. The enemy had made fortifications of his, with places in which to sleep in comfort. Moreover, a battered village like Neuve Chapelle would be made extremely strong with sandbag protections. We had seen that already at Richebourg, where we laughed at the shells falling around our billets.

Then we should have to fight our way across fields so sodden with winter rains that they were like morasses. Before the battle we had to throw bridges across drains and watercourses in order to enable a concentration of troops to be made quickly. Communication breast-

works were made, for communication trenches would quickly have filled with water. We dragged our way up with ammunition, bombs, rations, sandbags, barbed wire, spare bridges, planks, hurdles, and pickets, and stored them at depots in the fields. Knowing the time it took to do this on our side of the line, what were we to expect when we crossed to the German fields with no multiplication of bridges to help us over the watery parts, and all our fighting material to be carried forward?

As the day for the battle approached we looked skyward with the utmost anxiety. It would be impossible to conceal our preparations from German airmen. Fortunately for us our own airmen were then extremely powerful. They challenged the German planes, and it was obvious even to a simple private that we had command of the air in that section for the time being.

The battle plans, of course, were not revealed to humble people like myself, then a lance-corporal. Men of this rank, the one just above that of private, were not in the confidence of majors, let alone

major-generals. But it was clear to me from the lie of the land, from the assembly of ammunition and engineering material, and from the hope of getting to Lille, that we were in for a tremendous, shattering struggle. True, before we had Haig's message, one of the writer-fighters of our little group said it would be only a small biff, never mentioned in the papers. He said such attacks were constantly being made, and nothing was said about them. Joe Lee, Nick and I all held the big battle theory. We were convinced this was the battle that might end the war.

Not that we had much time for conversation in those days. We had become sweating coolies. We were carrying all through the hours of darkness, every night. How we came to loathe the sodden tracks, with wire overhead, wire underfoot, every few yards! We had

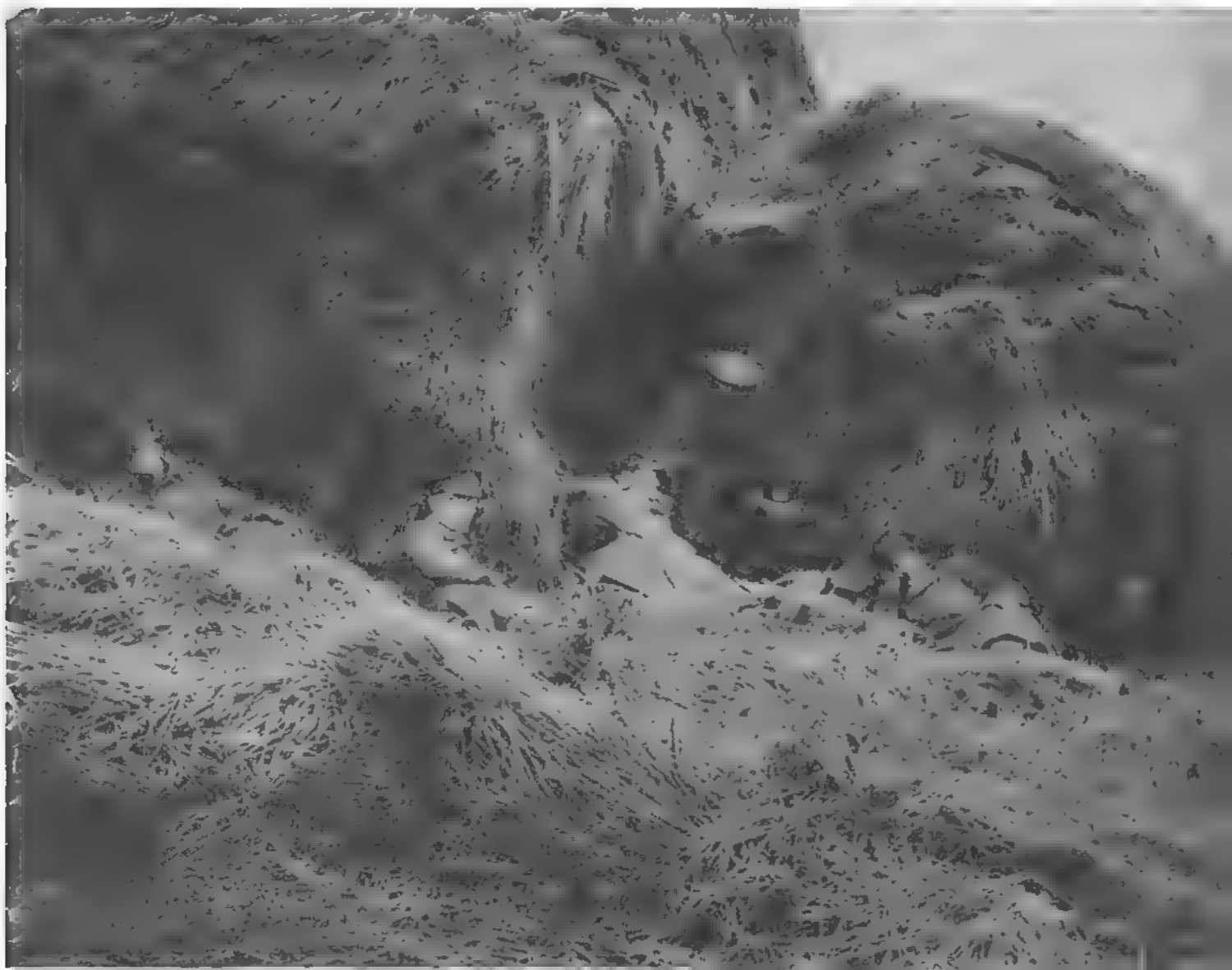
always to carry our rifles and ammunition with us, not because there was any danger of our being suddenly attacked, but because that is the military way. We should have been more useful without them, but no, that was against the military code.

So the day came, and still the enemy, as far as we could see, was blind to our battle preparations. We might be raw, but we were keen, intelligent men, all volunteers. The wasters and the criminals had been kicked out of the battalion or deserted in Scotland. We meant to do our best for the honour of the Black Watch, the pride of Dundee. We felt that loving eyes at home were upon us. Bewilderments were to come, but not yet the bleak misery, the all-but suicidal desolations of the Somme and Passchendaele.

#### HARVEST HOME ON A BATTLEFIELD

Headquarters were sometimes found in strange places in the course of a battle. Here during the battle of Neuve Chapelle, March 10-14, 1915, the headquarters of the 21st Brigade have been pitched temporarily in a farmyard. A brick building would be a clear mark for enemy gunners, and a rick, relic of last year's harvest, serves as a temporary shelter. The "dug-out," made by removing some of the straw, has at least the merit of comfort and warmth, dangerous as it would be if shelling began.

*Imperial War Museum*



It was the night of March 9, 1915. Snow swept down upon us in the flooded trenches near Neuve Chapelle. We grew colder and colder. I never thought I could be so chilled and still live. It was a biting torture for the body.

We could hardly drag our feet along when orders came to move from the trench to the Port Arthur dug-outs, there to snatch a few hours' sleep before we began battle.

At 5 a.m. my platoon comrades and I were routed out to move to a reserve trench. We shambled over ground hardened with frost. It was colder than ever.

We called it a trench, but it was nothing like the fortified cuttings that became familiar later. It was more of a breastwork, a stockade strengthened with sandbags of earth. Joe Lee, Nicholson, and I were together, sitting

close to each other, backs to the stockade. Dawn came, and we peered across at the German lines, wondering if Jerry knew we were coming.

At 7 a.m. a German flew out of a low-lying cloud, swooped over Port Arthur, and after coming down to three or four hundred feet, whence he must have been able to see our crowded lines, he raced back. Now we were for it. German guns began, but directed their fire against the Port Arthur trenches, which we had left. Except for our usual morning hate with registering guns at dawn, the British artillery held its fire until 7.30 a.m. Then began, after a single shot that appeared to be a signal, the hell fury of bombardment from 480 guns and howitzers. The noise almost split our numbed wits. As the shells went over our heads we grew more and more excited. We could not hear each

#### SITE OF A SALIENT HEROICALLY HELD

The photograph below shows the site of the salient known as Port Arthur, mentioned in page 306, where British soldiers once sheltered from shell-fire after the line at Neuve Chapelle had been broken. It is now occupied by a café, appropriately called "Auberge de la Bombe" while "Port Arthur" is commemorated in the inscription by the date "10 Mars 1915," over the door. Just opposite the café stands the memorial (right), one of the very few erected in France to the memory of an individual officer. Second-Lieutenant Crichton, whom it commemorates, is known to have been killed near this spot.

*Photos W. A. Davis, copyright A.P. Ltd*





other. Shots from the eighteen pounders were screaming not far over our heads, and much higher up, higher than the highest mountain of Europe, high explosives from the 15-inch howitzers were rushing like express trains. After a while we could trace the different sounds.

There was no difficulty in making out the German trenches. They had become long clouds of smoke and dust, flashing continuously with shell-bursts, and with enormous masses of trench material and bodies sailing high above the smoke cloud. The purely physical effect on us was one of extreme exhilaration. We could have laughed and cried with excitement. We thought that bombardment was winning the war before our eyes. Incredible that the men in the German front line could have escaped. We felt sure we were going to pour through the gap

#### VAIN HOPES OF VICTORY

LOOKING towards the village of Neuve Chapelle we saw the houses terribly battered, but not crumbled away as we expected. We thought the German artillery must have been swept out of existence. Vain hope. Counter fire opened upon us.

"They are shelling our fellows," Nicholson exclaimed, in extreme surprise. They were, indeed. We looked along the breastwork and saw, about 300 yards away, shrapnel plumping among our Black Watch Terriers. Stretcher-bearers ran along the line. Shell after shell came over, each about ten yards nearer Nicholson and myself. But a few minutes and our turn would come. We had no thought of escape. We had to lie and wait while the punctual shells worked along the line. "This looks like the end," said Nick.

On my right lay a young architect, Douglas Bruce, who had crept up to us for warmth. "Och," he said, "if we're for it we're for it."

It was the nearest we had yet been to death, and we were surprised at our calm. (We had then seen little killing at close quarters.)

DEATH was ruling a straight line along our trench. Crash! Crash! Crash! Our turn was coming. Now the line was veering slightly beyond our trench. The shells were falling five yards behind the breastwork, six yards, seven yards, eight yards.

"The next one's ours," said Nick. "Good luck, Linton." We shook hands. We wormed as low as we could. The shell came screaming. It burst ten yards away with a great gnashing roar. Earth drenched us. There was a cry

of astonishment and pain at my side, while yet the up-thrown earth was falling.

"Damn them!" said Douglas Bruce very heartily. His mouth was bleeding. He had had a whack on the jaw, and a tooth had been knocked out. He took it calmly.

"Stretcher-bearers," we cried, and a man crept up and did what he could.

The shrapnel passed along the line, growing more and more harmless as it fell farther behind the trench. Then

it stopped, all was quiet, and a lark sang. Bruce started to walk with bloody jaw on the first stage of a journey that was to take him back to Scotland.

An order came shouted along: "4th Black Watch, move to the left in single file."

It was 11 a.m. The village of Neuve Chapelle had been taken with the bayonet, and we were ordered to move forward to the captured German trenches. We passed many Indian



#### TO INDIA'S UNFORGOTTEN MEN

This impressive war memorial commemorates the Indian soldiers who fell at Neuve Chapelle and elsewhere in France. It stands in the corner of the battlefield known as "Pioneer Keep." The column is 50 feet high and, besides the names of 4,847 dead, battle honours, and the dedicatory inscription, it bears the words "God is One, His is the Victory," with similar texts in Arabic, Hindi and Gurmukhi.

*Photo, W. A. Davis, copyright A.P. Ltd.*



#### WHEN THE GERMAN GUNS HAD THE BEST OF IT

The battle of Neuve Chapelle brought home to Sir John French the terrible shortage of munitions in the British Army compared with the German Army. The photograph shows shells of the German barrage bursting close behind the British front line trenches to prevent reinforcements being brought up—and there could be no effective reply. The Indian Corps and the IV Corps were ordered to “push through the barrage of fire regardless of cost.” “We passed many Indian dead,” says Mr. Linton Andrews in this chapter; they numbered in the end nearly 5,000.

*Imperial War Museum*

dead and stinking shell-pits on the way. There was a point at which we had to jump a ditch. As we jumped we were in full view of the Germans. They were a longish way off, but now and then hit a man as he jumped. Our company commander, Captain Boase, on the other side of the ditch, called on us to hurry. We were bunching slightly as men hesitated to jump. I remember four in front of me. The first ran as fast as he could, and jumped high. Crack! He was wounded slightly, but carried on. Then a little stumpy fellow, as he jumped, was shot dead, his knees sagging as he fell. The next man,

oldish and heavy, just flopped into the ditch itself and scrambled out unhurt. Then Nicholson rushed it safely.

Now for it. I took a good run, aimed to jump high, tucked my legs under me, then thrust them forward for the landing, just as though I were jumping for Peele B House at my old school, Christ's Hospital. Bullets whistled past, but all was well.

Curious that that jump stands out so clearly in my memory. I cannot think what happened next, except that there seemed to be more and more fire, and the situation was more and more confused,

and the stench of the shell-pits stung the nostrils.

I remember seeing one of our men flop before a heavy shell-burst. He rose covered with earth, and made towards me white with passion, his eyes rolling. “This is madness!” he cried. “The world's gone mad. Why don't you stop it?”

“Wish I could,” I said.

“It's murder,” he went on. “Why don't the papers stop it?”

I spoke soothingly, but he said the same things over and over again, and went off raging.

I remembered being stationed with my section, probably after some hours, to guard a pump at a brewery. As we moved to it we passed a notice-board still standing with the word “Danger.” Nicholson laughed as if it were the greatest joke of the war. By this time I was too tired to laugh. I was stupid with fatigue, cold, and strain.

## THE CRUCIFIX OF THE TRENCHES

Many soldiers who fought at Neuve Chapelle remember the famous crucifix, which stood throughout the tornado of fire of the battle. The photograph below shows the scene in that part of the village known as Crucifix Corner, just after the battle where amid the wrack of war the crucifix stands out against the sky. Later it was taken into the trenches, where it was damaged, but never destroyed. A replica of it, seen right, has now been set up near Neuve Chapelle, and the remains of the original figure of Christ rest beneath it. The crucifix bears the inscription: "Christ of the Trenches 1915-1918, restored by the Bocquet family."

*Photos, Imperial War Museum,  
and  
W. A. Davis, copyright A.P. Ltd.*





# HEARTBREAK BATTLE:

## Or the Horror of Neuve Chapelle

by Wilfred Ewart

**W**ILFRED EWART must always be remembered as one of the great war writers. He joined his regiment, the Scots Guards, in France in February 1915, and within a few weeks was plunged into the ghastly battle of Neuve Chapelle, a heartbreaking and costly failure. He survived the war, entered upon a distinguished literary career, and met his death in 1923 by a chance shot during a fiesta in Mexico City. His account of Neuve Chapelle is a masterpiece of descriptive prose

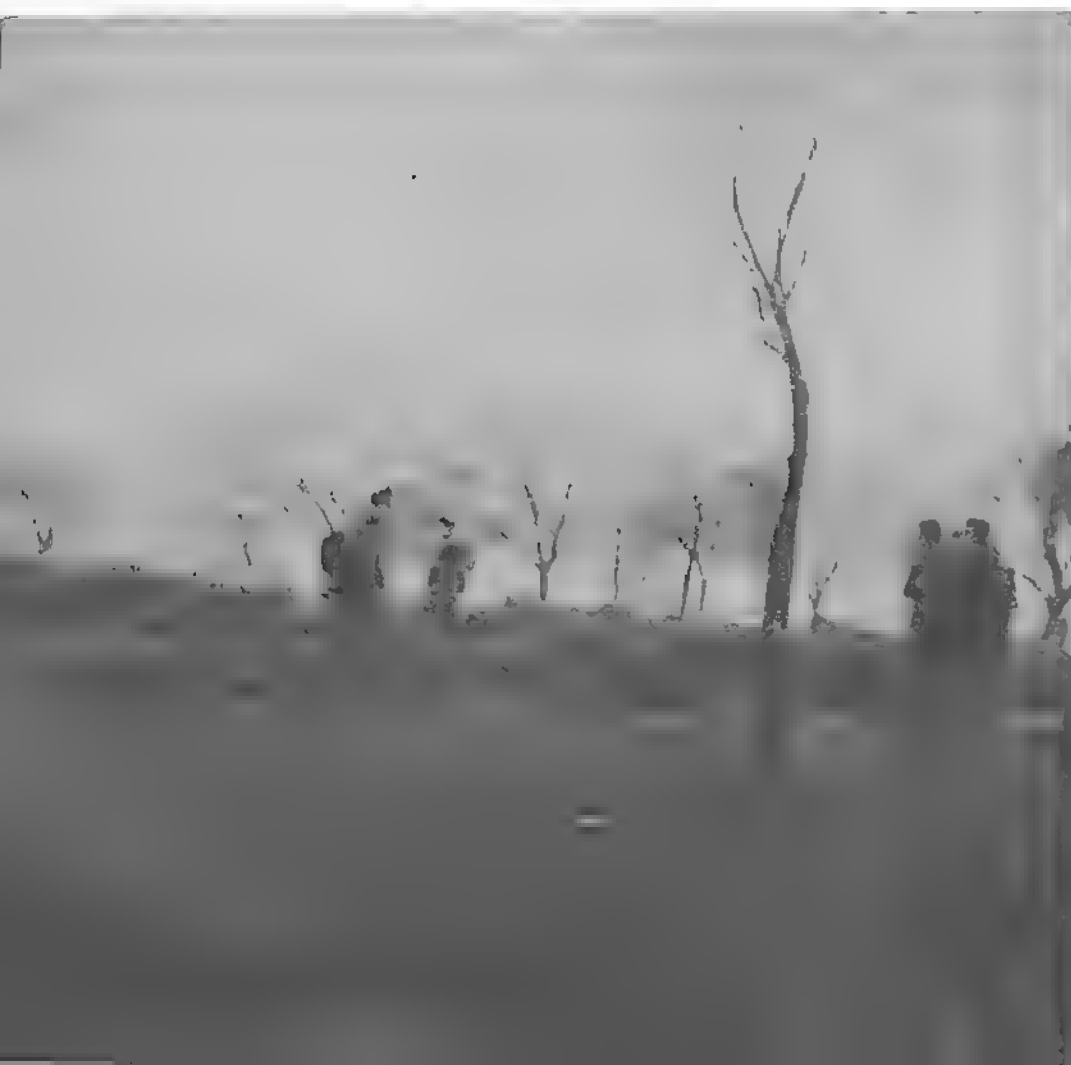
**S**EVEREN o'clock approaches. Word comes that the attack on the right has been launched. Word is passed down to get ready. Officers load their revolvers and button their tunics across the throat. Platoons are marshalled together and told off. "Fix bayonets!" A cold, rasping sound, and six hundred blades flash in the morning sunlight.

"Move to the right in file!" "Right turn!" "Quick march!" The orders follow each other in quick succession. Number one company leads the way along the shell-stricken road. A lane branches off to the left; abutting upon it is a maze of deep, disused trenches. The commanding officer and adjutant are here, uttering last words of encouragement to the men as they file

### FORWARD TO WHAT DESTINY?

In the cold light of a March morning in 1915 thousands of British soldiers moved forward to grapple with the enemy at Neuve Chapelle. Among the troops engaged were the 2nd Royal Scots Fusiliers, here seen advancing to their assembly position. How calamitous this frightful battle was for the British infantry is described with moving realism in this chapter written by one who was in the midst of the tragedy.

*Imperial War Museum*



into them. Knee-deep in mud and water they are, with planks laid along the bottom here and there to afford a better footing. At the end of the winding passages we halt, awaiting the final word. The order, when it comes, is short and simple: "Advance 95 degrees left."

Company officers blow their whistles and the whole front line swarms through the gaps in the sandbag breastwork and rushes pell-mell across a hundred yards of open ground, pitted with holes and obstructed with loose strands of barbed wire.

Directly we get out in the open we come under very heavy rifle-fire and shrapnel. Bullets sing and splutter merrily in all directions. Once across that open stretch we are in the first line of German trenches. Already they have been reversed by our infantry, though the trench is shallow and the breastwork low. Indeed, the crush of troops in this section is altogether too great.

**M**EN cannot obtain shelter from the ceaseless stream of bullets. Some even have to crouch down on the top of the ground. A strapping fellow topples forward groaning into the trench, his hands clasped to his forehead, from which the blood pours. Another rolls quietly over on his side stone dead. The lad next to me, virile and strong a moment ago, now lies feebly moaning, shot through the body. Two or three others, variously wounded, sit, half-conscious, with their backs against the parapet.

And we have been out only five minutes!

We can only advance in short rushes, taking cover wherever possible, and it is impossible to keep the formation. We are about half a mile west of Neuve Chapelle, and the country is absolutely open, only slight depressions here and there.

**I**T is time for another rush. Up we clamber again, dive one by one under a loose strand of wire and stream diagonally in batches across an enclosure, men following officers as best they can. The air whistles—nay, tingles—with bullets, and it is with a feeling more of surprise than anything that after each rush one reaches the other side. We find another breastwork similarly crowded with men but better protected than the last. For the ground in front has been blown into a huge mound by the action of the British shells, and this provides adequate shelter. The mound must be at least forty feet high.



**NEUVE CHAPELLE AFTER THE 'HEARTBREAK BATTLE'**

The two photographs in this page show the complete devastation of Neuve Chapelle during the battle. Above is the village street in March 1915 after it had been taken by the 25th Brigade, 8th Division. Below is a homestead on the outskirts completely smashed, while the crucifix behind it, seen also in page 311, still stands.

*Photos, Imperial War Museum*



Beneath it the soil had been hollowed and scarred and rent into a great cavity—a pit of horror indescribable. Here in some vast explosion all the refuse, all the material of the neighbouring trenches seem to have fallen. Many German dead are there, grey and bloody, amid the upturned earth; by itself lies the body of a British soldier, stark and stiff, the face covered, doubtless by some comrade's hand, with a piece of white tarpaulin; the trivial things of life are there—biscuit-tins, scraps of food, hand-mirrors, the trivial things men carry in their pockets

And everywhere litter of equipment: German helmets, with the golden eagle emblazoned on the front, German caps and accoutrements, rifles, clips of cartridges, pistols, and weapons of all kinds. The tradition of blood and iron has found its fitting consummation in this one place.

Through this pit we clamber and up the mound beyond; then dart along a kind of ridge. A small river or large ditch of stagnant water is bridged at one place by a plank which has broken down. It is no time to hesitate. The only thing to do is to plunge in and somehow stagger across with the filthy, brackish, greenish water lapping one's chin. Rifle and bayonet, already clogged with mud, are useless. On the farther bank lies a wounded Grenadier officer attended by his sergeant.

THE country is now dead flat and open, the enemy cannot be more than three hundred yards distant. A broad stretch of ploughed field, heavy with recent rains, has to be crossed. Men fall right and left, prostrate khaki figures dot the ground in all directions. The crackle of rifle-fire freshens, the whole air hums with bullets. Burdened with our packs and weight of equipment, we can only muster a jog-trot in such heavy going. Many prefer to crawl over the ground on all fours, though this little advantages them; some pause for breath in the shell-holes, others lie down in the open.

#### HOURS OF HELL FIRE

ON the far side of the ploughed field is a shallow depression in the ground. Here, the only available cover, are disposed a number of troops of various companies and regiments. Immediately in front, not one hundred and fifty yards away, is a group of buildings surmounted by a tall, red-brick chimney—a landmark in all that countryside—known as the Moulin du Piètre. It looks more like a mine in one of our own colliery districts than a mill. It fairly bristles with rifles and machine-guns. The hail of bullets above our heads increases. We flatten our faces in the

muddy ground and lie there for three solid hours under a hell fire that seems to come from every side but one. Shrapnel bursts as regularly as clockwork within twenty or thirty yards and scatters earth over one every time.

Behind us the rear companies of the battalion are still advancing. They come on in groups and batches in widely extended order. Meanwhile, we lie down in a long, irregular line which grows thicker, thus affording a better mark for the enemy's riflemen and artillery. So, presently the order comes for two platoons to advance about a hundred yards to a line of temporary breastworks and join the Grenadiers who are ahead. We show our heads and the bullets begin to fly as thick as hail.

#### DREAD DIN OF BATTLE

I HAD hardly got to my feet and was jumping over a ditch when I was hit in the left leg and took an unceremonious toss down the bank. It hurt a bit for a time, but Warner and Seymour (two fellow officers) were moving up with me, so there was no confusion among the men. Five minutes later Seymour, as I shortly afterwards learned, got a shrapnel bullet through the head and collapsed, but by then our tide had passed on, out of my sight. My thigh hurt me in such a way that I could not move for at least two hours. Nor, indeed, dare I do so. For in the mill and its group of adjacent buildings only that bare hundred and fifty yards away the enemy still swarmed.

So I lay on my face motionless, listening to the sounds of the battle. They were so numerous that I cannot enumerate them all. It was the shrapnel which caused the greatest dread. How narrowly it whizzed overhead, to burst about thirty yards behind with a deafening bang and a flash of fire followed by the sing-sing of many bullets which buried themselves in the ground. Surely none could escape! The whole sky was dotted with the black smoke of high explosives and the yellow puffs of lyddite, each with its flash of flame. The air stank of powder and the fumes of sulphur.

MORE terrible—not to be forgotten—were the salvos of the German batteries close in front, which fired almost together every three minutes. Boom-boom-boom-boom—they threatened to burst the brain, they caused a racking headache, these terrible tornadoes of sound. The machine-gun and the rifle-fire were as nothing after these. The rat-tat-tat, the clack-clack, the ping-ping sent messages well overhead to the trenches behind and the still-advancing troops. Much other noise came to puzzle the ears, to weary the brain: the faint

shouting of men, the clink-clink of the entrenching tools as soldiers dug themselves in, the great hollow explosions which resounded afar off amid the ruins of Aubers and Neuve Chapelle.

And the groans, the moans, the crying of those who lay around!

I STARTED to crawl back. The dressing-station was at least a mile away, but things seemed quieter. I crawled over the ground ever so slowly, for those riflemen in the mill were doubtless watching. The ploughed field seemed interminable—I could not see the breastwork on the other side, and the only landmarks were the dead and wounded men who lay at intervals along the direction of advance. Now the supports had ceased to come up. Yet suddenly, as happens in modern fighting, the combatants took inspiration, the battle burst forth afresh. One above another common shells and shrapnel exploded above and beside me, earth fell about my ears, bullets tingled past them. Flash after flash, as of lightning, dazzled my eyes. I was barely half-way across. Creeping into a deep shell-hole I flattened my face. Close behind the German howitzer double-battery boomed shatteringly. Close ahead the firing of our own guns was so swift, so furious, as to be one continuous roar. Also the rifle-fire freshened along the whole front—it was as though some great dry wood-pile had been newly kindled.

The air sang songs with the passage of the shells, the earth trembled under the detonation of such huge guns as had never been used before—shriek and roar, boom and bang and crackle.

For half an hour I lay there, in company with a dead man, thinking the end of all things had come.

BUT like some gust of human passion the holocaust spent itself at last. And I, leaving my Burberry, crawled on among the shell-pits and the relics of the soldiery, the rifles, the caps, and the helmets, the emptyings of pockets, the equipment and the haversacks, the wasted rounds of ammunition, the revolvers, and the scraps of food. Past many an upturned waxen face and shreds of men where shells had done their work—and blood.

I glance at the other figures as I creep by. They, too, are very peaceful, very quiet, very happy. Nearly all are Englishmen, and, looking at them, I realize that I am in the presence of a great fraternity of soldiers. Nothing shall disturb their rest again: neither shells, nor bullets, nor the call of duty.

In the sunny meadow beyond, a clergyman and two helpers have begun their work of burying the dead.





*L'hotopress*

**HERE IN 1915 MEN FOUGHT, FED AND SLEPT**

Here is a scene in a British trench in the winter of 1915. Death is perhaps not far distant for these men, for the German trenches are not many hundred yards away. A sniper looks over the parapet waiting for an enemy head to show, while on the other side an equally alert watch is kept for careless movement. But these men must eat even while death stalks them and, seated in the trench, a sergeant, tranquilly smoking his pipe, cooks over a bucket fire the best food he can get together. The front of the trench is revetted with boards held in place by saplings.



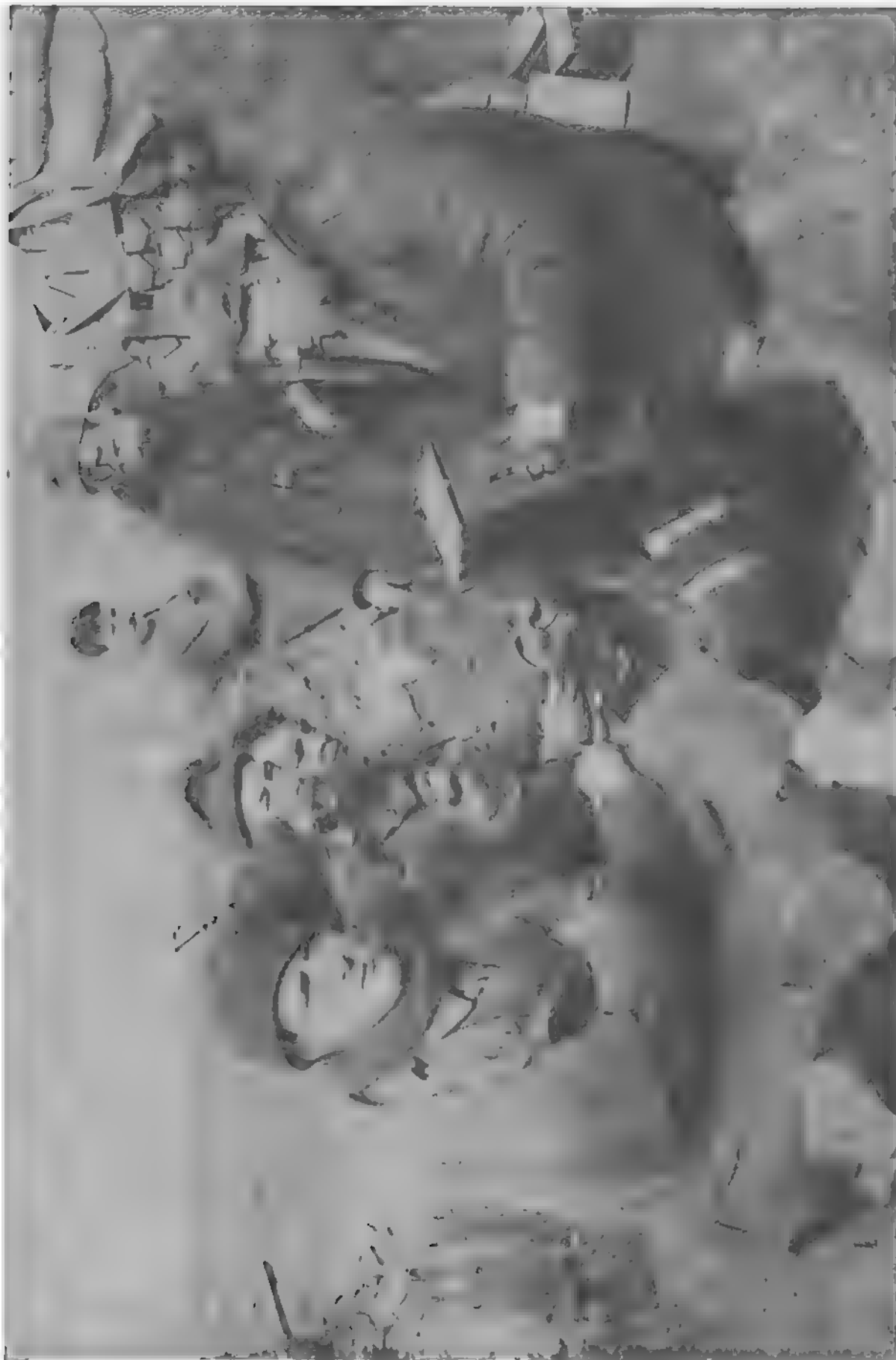
#### **EVEN WAR HAD ITS HAPPY HOURS**

Not all the memories of the war are charged with gruesome horror and tragedy, and every fighting man can recall incidents, such as that shown above, in which the hardship and strain of the warrior's life were mitigated for a while by good comradeship and fleeting, simple pleasures. Here is a cheerful party taking a meal and a spell of relaxation in the seclusion of a copse.



The photograph was taken in March 1915 when the men still cooked their own rations on improvised stoves. They belonged to a motor machine-gun unit, a force brought into being in February 1915. The temporary sanctuary in which they are seen was situated in front of Blauwe Poort Farm, south of Zillebeke lake. Such woods were soon obliterated by the torrent of shells that day and night the batteries poured forth.

*Imperial War Museum*



#### OFF-DUTY DITTIES AND TUNES OF THE TRENCHES

Spring 1915 saw men of the 2nd Battalion Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (19th Brigade) at Bois Grenier. They are in a support trench, as the absence of a parados shows. Behind the man with the accordion can be seen the expanded metal revetment. As for the music, these Scots do not look too pleased with their accordion, which is surely the poorest substitute for the pipes. The weather is still chilly and most of the men are wearing stocking caps.

*Imperial War Museum*



# AT the CRACK of DAWN

## Air-Raiding Before Breakfast

by Flight-Lieut. Harold Rosher, R.N.A.S.

SOME of the most moving documents in the literature of the war were the simple, unstudied letters written home by officers and men who day after day were facing the imminent threat of death. Flight-Lieut. Harold Rosher was in the Naval branch of the air service. He was killed on February 27, 1916, when testing a machine at Dover. Earlier in the war he had taken part in several daring raids on German bases. It is fitting that a letter to his parents, written on March 24, 1915, should be reproduced in the precise words in which he wrote it—a tribute to a most gallant airman. The Editor of his war letters added to Mr. Rosher's own very modest account the official bulletins which were published at the time

No. 1 Squadron, R.N.A.S., B.E.F.,  
March 24, 1915.

Dearest Mum and Dad,

Another successful little jaunt. Five of us were chosen to go: Capt. Courtney [Major Ivor T. Courtney, Squadron Comdr., R.N.], Meates (who travelled up to town from Dover in the train with Dad), self, and two subs named Andreae and Huskisson. Courtney and I got there and back; Meates [B. C. Meates, Flt.-Lieut., R.N.] came down in Holland with engine trouble and is interned. . . . Andreae [P. G. Andreae, Flt.-Lieut.,

R.N.] lost his way in the clouds and fog and came back; and Huskisson [B. L. Huskisson, Flt.-Comdr., R.N.] did the same, only dropped his bombs on Ostend on the way. Our mark, by the way, was the submarine base at Hoboken, near Antwerp

Yesterday morning we were to have gone, but the weather was not good enough, and last night we slept at the aerodrome so as to get off at the "crack of dawn." This morning we got up about 3.30 a.m. (thank goodness, the weather was warm), and breakfast followed. It's mighty hard to get down eggs and bread and butter at that hour. We cut for the order of starting, but decided to keep as near one another as possible. I went off last but one, at 5.30 a.m., and streaked out straight across the sea. We were pretty heavily loaded, and my bus wouldn't climb much. I saw one machine ahead of me, but lost it almost immediately in the clouds, which were very low (2,500 feet), and it was also very misty.

Our course was right up the coast, past Zeebrugge, and then cut in across the land. At the mouth of the Scheldt I got clear of some of the clouds and saw Courtney behind and 2,000 feet above me, my machine then being about 5,000 feet only. He rapidly overtook me (we were all on Avros, but his was faster). Unfortunately, over Antwerp there were no clouds. Courtney was about five or six minutes in front of me, and I



F. N. Birkett

### FLIGHT-LIEUT. ROSHER

The power of the war-plane was an unknown quantity when hostilities broke out, but soon pilots such as Flight-Lieut. Rosher, seen above, showed by their daring feats how great and formidable a part airmen were to play in the mighty conflict.

saw him volplane out of sight. I had to go on some little way before I spotted the yards myself. I next saw Courtney very low down, flying away to the coast with shrapnel bursting around him. He came down to under 500 feet and, being first there, dropped his bombs before he was fired on.

As the wind was dead against me, I decided to come round in a semi-circle to cross the yards with the wind, so as to attain a greater speed. I was only 5,500 feet up, and they opened fire on me with shrapnel as soon as I got within range.

It began getting a bit hot, so before I got quite round I shut off my petrol and came down with a steep volplane until I was 2,500 feet, when I turned on my petrol again and continued my descent at a rate of well over a hundred miles an hour. I passed over the yards at about 1,000 feet only, and loosed all my bombs over the place.

The whole way down I was under fire, two anti-aircraft guns in the yard, guns from the forts on either side, rifle fire, mitrailleuse or machine-guns, and, most weird of all, great bunches (15 to 20) of what looked like green rockets, but I think they were flaming bullets.

The excitement of the moment was terrific. I have never travelled so fast before in my life. My chief impressions were the great speed, the flaming bullets



Tapscott

### PIONEER AIR-RAIDER

In the raid described in this page Squadron-Commander Ivor Courtney took a daring part. For 250 miles he flew his machine, and on reaching his objective dived low before releasing his bombs while enemy anti-aircraft guns, machine-guns, and rifles poured their fire towards him. Surviving the war, he retired from the Royal Air Force with the rank of Group Captain.



#### 'PLANE THAT MADE AIR HISTORY

From an aerodrome at Dunkirk Flight-Lieut. Rosher of the R.N.A.S. took off to carry out the raid which his own simple words describe so graphically in this chapter. Here is seen the actual 80 h.p. Avro biplane which he flew with such courage and skill on that occasion. Shortly afterwards he made a gallant attempt to intercept a Zeppelin on its way to England, and also made a bombing expedition against submarines. Other adventures followed until the career of this very fine pilot was ended by a fatal crash during a test flight in 1916

streaking by, the incessant rattle of the machine-gun and rifle fire, and one or two shells bursting close by, knocking my machine all sideways, and pretty nearly deafening me. (On my return I found my machine was only hit twice—rather wonderful; one bullet hole through the tail and a piece of shrapnel buried in the main spar of one wing. I have now got it out.)

I FOUND myself across the yards, and felt a mild sort of surprise. My eyes must have been sticking out of my head like a shrimp's. I know I was gasping for breath and crouching down in the fuselage (body of the machine). I was, however, by no means clear, for shrapnel was still bursting around me. I jammed the rudder first one way and then the other. I banked first on to one wing tip and then on to the other, now slipping outwards, and now up and now down. I was literally hedged in by forts (and only 1,000 feet up), and had to run the gauntlet before getting away.

I was under rifle fire right up to the frontier, and even then the Dutch potted me.

My return journey was trying. Most of the time I had to fly at under 500 feet, as I ran into thick clouds and mist. I pattered gaily right over Flushing, and within a few hundred yards of a Dutch cruiser and two torpedo boats. I got back home about a quarter of an hour after Courtney, having been very nearly four hours in the air, and having covered, I suppose, getting on for 250 miles.

Have not yet heard what damage was done. The C.O. was awfully braced.

I had some breakfast when I got back, wrote out my report, had lunch, and then a very, very hot bath. Tomorrow I am going out with Courtney to see the War, as we have been given the day off to do as we please.

My engine gave me several anxious moments. For some reason it cut right out over the Scheldt, and I had actually given up all hope when it picked up again. It was pretty risky work flying several miles out to sea, only just in sight of land, too, but our surprise (or I should say Courtney's) of the Germans was certainly complete.

Must really stop now.

Ever your loving son,  
HAROLD.

#### NOTE

The following is the Admiralty's official account of the Antwerp raid:

"The Secretary of the Admiralty yesterday afternoon [March 24, 1915] issued the following communication from Wing-Commander Longmore:

"I have to report that a successful air attack was carried out this morning by five machines of the Dunkirk Squadron on the German submarines being constructed at Hoboken, near Antwerp.

"Two of the pilots had to return owing to thick weather, but Squadron-Commander Ivor T. Courtney and Flight-Lieutenant H. Rosher reached their objective, and after planing down to 1,000 feet dropped four bombs each on the submarines. It is believed that considerable damage has been done to both the works and to submarines. The works were observed to be on fire. In all five submarines were observed on the slip.

"Flight-Lieutenant B. Crossley-Meates was obliged by engine trouble to descend in Holland.

"Owing to the mist the two pilots experienced considerable difficulty in finding their way, and were subjected to a heavy gunfire while delivering their attack."

The French official communiqué gave precise details, thus:

"At Hoboken the Antwerp shipbuilding yard was set on fire and two submarines were destroyed, while a third was damaged. Forty German workmen were killed and sixty-two wounded."



#### LAST FEW WORDS

The exploit which forms the subject of this chapter was but one of many which the Royal Naval Air Service pilots carried out in 1915. Above is seen a pilot talking to a French comrade before taking off for a raiding flight.

## IN THE FIRST FLIGHT THEN— VETERANS NOW

**U**NLIKE the Navy and the Army, Britain's flying service, while still in an embryo stage, went into action in 1914 without tradition, and with its effectiveness unproven. Here are seen three distinguished men whose acumen and leadership helped to rear the then new arm into a mighty force of devastating power. These officers are shown as they were and as they are today.

### TRENCHARD

From major in 1913 to major-general in 1916. Such was the remarkable rise of Viscount Trenchard (above), one of the outstanding figures of Britain's flying arm during the Great War. It was largely due to his organizing genius that the Royal Flying Corps grew from a small, ill-equipped force to be one of huge size and power. Remaining with the Service after the war, he became Marshal of the R.A.F. in 1927 and was created a viscount in 1936.

*Russell and Photopress*

### SALMOND

As a soldier of long experience and a pioneer aviator, Sir John Salmond (right) had already foreseen the vast possibilities of the air arm when he joined the Royal Flying Corps in 1912. When the Great War broke out his abilities were given full play and he was made Director-General of Military Aeronautics in 1917. In 1918 he commanded the R.F.C. and R.A.F. in the field and, remaining with the service, became Marshal of the R.A.F. in 1933.

*Elkott & Fry and Russell*

### SYKES

When a Royal Warrant established the Royal Flying Corps on April 13, 1912, Sir Frederick Sykes (left), then a major, became commander of the military wing which he himself had raised, and with this force he went to France in 1914. In 1918 he was promoted to major-general and was appointed Chief of the Air Staff. Receiving high honours and a knighthood in 1919, he became Governor of Bombay in 1928.

*Russell and Keystone*

# Gallipoli: Bombardment & Landing

March 17 — April 27, 1915

\* 61 March 17 — 18, 1915

## MY LAST HOURS in the IRRESISTIBLE Marine's Heroic Story of the Dardanelles by L.-Cpl. Powell, R.M.

**A**L. through the day of March 17, 1915, the Irresistible had been in a seething state of excitement. On deck, in the various casemates, the guns' crews had been busily engaged in seeing to their beloved guns, one man testing the sights, the ammunition numbers getting their supply of shells ready. Every man was doing his little bit, with a quiet smile of satisfaction, and similar scenes were being enacted throughout the great Fleet that lay riding at anchorage—such a Fleet as had never before assembled in such a place.

A magnificent spectacle it was, to see the different warships, all manner and classes of them, from the gigantic super-Dreadnought Queen Elizabeth (known throughout the fleet as the "Lizzie") down to the humble trawlers, the little boats that did their work equally as well as the biggest ship there.

**G**RIM, black destroyers raced to and from the flagship, where the admiral was holding a council with all the captains of the fleet. The French admiral, his officers, and a representative of the one Russian warship, all were there. And such a meeting it was, too, a meeting that on the morrow was to produce results that would be talked about half the world over. For the 18th was the day selected for the grand assault on the Dardanelles Forts.

The shrill whistles of the boatswain's mates woke us in the morning. "Show a leg! Show a leg! Rise and shine!" At last the day, so long looked forward to, had arrived; the day for which all the preparations had been made.

Down below, in the stokehold and

**T**HE Gallipoli campaign began purely as a naval operation, the aim being to reduce the forts of the Dardanelles and force the passage of the Narrows to the Sea of Marmora and Constantinople. This having failed, a military landing was decided upon, which took place on April 25. ¶ These early days are described in this section by L.-Cpl. Powell, R.M., who was in the Irresistible when she was sunk during the bombardment of March 18. ¶ Sir Ian Hamilton, who was in charge of the military operations, writes his hourly impressions of the heroic landing, and Major Mure tells the story of the historic ship River Clyde and the shambles which surrounded it. ¶ To two Australian soldiers is entrusted the task of describing the heroism of their comrades at the Anzac landing and during the great Turkish counter-attack. Few more bitter conflicts occurred during the Great War.

engine-room, the grimy stokers were getting up steam, half naked, black with coal-dust, the men who are seen least of all, and yet no body of men work harder. Down below again, behind the armoured belt, the surgeons and their assistants were busy erecting a miniature hospital. Several operating tables were to be seen, lint and bandages were laid out, the instruments all handy, ready for any emergency.

In the various parts of the ship the bluejackets and Marines were going about their work, some testing the water-tight doors, on which so much depended, others closing all deadlights, screwing down the steel covers, to keep out any stray missiles.

### GRIM, FLOATING FORTRESS

**S**OON the whole ship was still. At last we were cleared for action, and truly grim did we look—a vast mass of 15,000 tons, a floating fortress indeed. On deck, groups of men clustered together, talking eagerly amongst themselves, and over all hung a curious air of expectancy, a feeling hard to define.

At 8 a.m. the big ships were to commence their task. Sure enough, on the stroke of eight bells, we could see the giant Queen Elizabeth slowly steaming away, followed by the Lord Nelson, Inflexible and Agamemnon. Truly a sight to stir one's blood—those monster ships, with ever-increasing speed, heading towards the Dardanelles and their grim work of destruction. Followed the French squadron, four ships of the line, so different in build to our own ships, yet giving one a true impression of their power—ugly, squat ships, yet so very grim and business-like.

In one long line they steamed away, and now there remained only the older battleships, the old "crocks," as we called them. There was the Irresistible (of course, in the writer's opinion, the best ship of the lot!), the Albion, Ocean, Triumph, Swiftsure, and Majestic, not one of them under fifteen years of age, and yet for this particular kind of work not to be equalled.

A very short while elapsed before the ships that had left us got to work; the thunder of their guns could be heard quite plainly by us. I am sure there wasn't a man amongst us who did not envy our comrades already up there, although we all knew that our turn would not be very long in coming.

The morning dragged along slowly. No incident worth recording occurred, unless it was a signal flashed back to our waiting squadron from the Queen Elizabeth, saying that splendid progress was being made.

But all things come to an end, and our turn of inactivity was almost over. Shortly before noon the signal came through for our little fleet to proceed—the signal we had all been waiting for so patiently! At last we were to have our turn. "Hands to anchor stations!" was piped, and in less time almost than it takes to tell, we were under way, steaming slowly ahead, waiting to take our place in line. Forming up into line ahead, the Albion leading, our squadron steamed slowly towards the entrance of the Dardanelles. As yet, all hands were on deck, eager to have one last look around before we went to "action stations."

**A**s we turned the corner, and caught our first sight of the ships already there, we instantly realized what we were in for. A long way up the Straits, spread about all over the place, were the Allied ships, the French lying right in close to both shores, while lying behind and firing over them were our own four big ships. All around the water was dotted with white splashes of foam, where the Turkish shells were falling. What with the vivid flashes from the guns, the splashes from the shells, now falling ahead, now astern,



it was truly a sight never to be forgotten.

But any more looking on was cut short by the bugle sounding "Action!" At the rush everybody went to their respective stations, and then, with the guns loaded and everything ready to begin, the six "crocks" steamed into position, into the inferno of shells and shot.

WHAT my feelings were I leave the reader to guess. Secure inside an upper-deck casemate, and looking through the aperture through which our gun poked, I had an excellent view of it all. I could see the shells dropping all around us, hear them whistling and shrieking overhead, and as yet we had not fired a round. But soon we commenced, and in a very short time all the fourteen battleships were hammering away for all they were worth.

The noise was tremendous—one continual roar. Surely, I thought, nothing ashore could live under such a tremendous fire! For nearly six hours now the bombardment had been going on, and yet there had been no lull in the firing; if anything, it increased in its

intensity as the afternoon wore on. Some part of the time our gun would not bear on the target, so our gun's crew had an opportunity of looking out a little, to see what was going on all around. From where I was I could see, almost at the very entrance to the Straits, it seemed, the Queen Elizabeth battering away, her huge 15-in. guns pointing upwards, and great clouds of yellow smoke drifting away from her every time she fired. And all around her the water was splashed up in tremendous columns. Shells were being simply poured in her direction.

Yet through it all the "Lizzie" continued her firing, in contempt, as it were, of these puny efforts to do her harm. It seemed marvellous to us, looking on, that she was not hit.

Time was getting on, still there was no lull in the firing. Looking out of my casemate I could observe, steaming

slowly towards us, one of the French squadron. We afterwards knew it to have been the Bouvet. As she came along, all her guns blazing away, she presented a remarkable picture. Little did the poor fellows aboard her realize how very near they were to their doom!

It all happened so suddenly. One minute the Bouvet was steaming majestically along, the next moment a tremendous cloud of smoke or steam arose, completely hiding her from view, and when, after two or three minutes, the smoke cleared away, where had been a gallant ship there now remained only a few struggling forms in the water.

Up dashed a destroyer, which soon had the poor fellows aboard, and all the while the shells were falling fast around the little vessel, as if to drive her from her errand of mercy. Yet she was not touched, and, turning, sped away at full speed for the entrance of the Straits.

#### 'LIZZIE' OF GALLIPOLI FAME

The Queen Elizabeth, flagship of the Allied fleet at Gallipoli, was affectionately known to soldiers and sailors, too, as "Lizzie." She is here seen in Mudros harbour just before leaving for Turkish waters. She shows one of the first examples of naval camouflage, for her stem is painted white just where the bow wave would be when she was at full speed. Thus from a distance she might appear to be moving fast when actually she was only just under way. Beyond her is one of the transports that carried troops to Gallipoli.

*Imperial War Museum*



To celebrate, as it were, this success on the enemy's part, the firing from land became fiercer than ever. It was about this time that the Irresistible received her first blow. A shell—I think it must have been a 14-in.—hit us somewhere forward. Fair and square it caught us, for the whole ship shook, actually reeled over a little, and then righted herself once more to an even keel. A few minutes after this first hit another big shell burst in the water immediately outside our casemate, simply drenching everybody inside with the splash it made. Water was everywhere, a column of it was raised high enough to swamp a smaller vessel.

**T**HINGS began to be rather lively now. It seemed to us that the Irresistible was being made the sole target, judging by the number of shells that fell around us, although, of course, such was not the case. One of the chaps in our crew remarked, with a grin, "Something will

happen in a minute; it is getting — hot."

And, sure enough, something did happen. We had just been hit again forward by another big shell that shook us all up, and then, before we had time to recover ourselves, a tremendous shock was felt. Fully half a dozen of our crew were thrown violently over, and when order had been regained there was the old Irresistible heeling over to port, at an angle of fully 45 degrees, and our gun pointing in the air for all the world like an anti-aircraft gun.

It did not need anyone to explain.

We one and all knew that the Irresistible had fought her last fight. My feelings at this moment were too awful to describe. I never want to feel the same as I did then. Little did I think, while watching the Bouvet go down, that our own turn was so soon to come. Except for the men who had been thrown down picking themselves up, nobody had moved in our casemate. All we could do was to await orders, looking, meanwhile, into each other's white, set faces.

**B**UT we were not to remain long waiting. Orders came along to clear the casemate, everybody to get on deck. So, opening the casemate doors, we trooped out, wondering what would be the next thing to happen. Then we were told to get aft. So aft we all went, and in a very short while all the ship's company, with the exception of the gun's crew who was still firing, fell in in their places. Not a sign of panic or disorder showed itself anywhere; everybody had gone to his respective station just as calmly as if it were a parade.

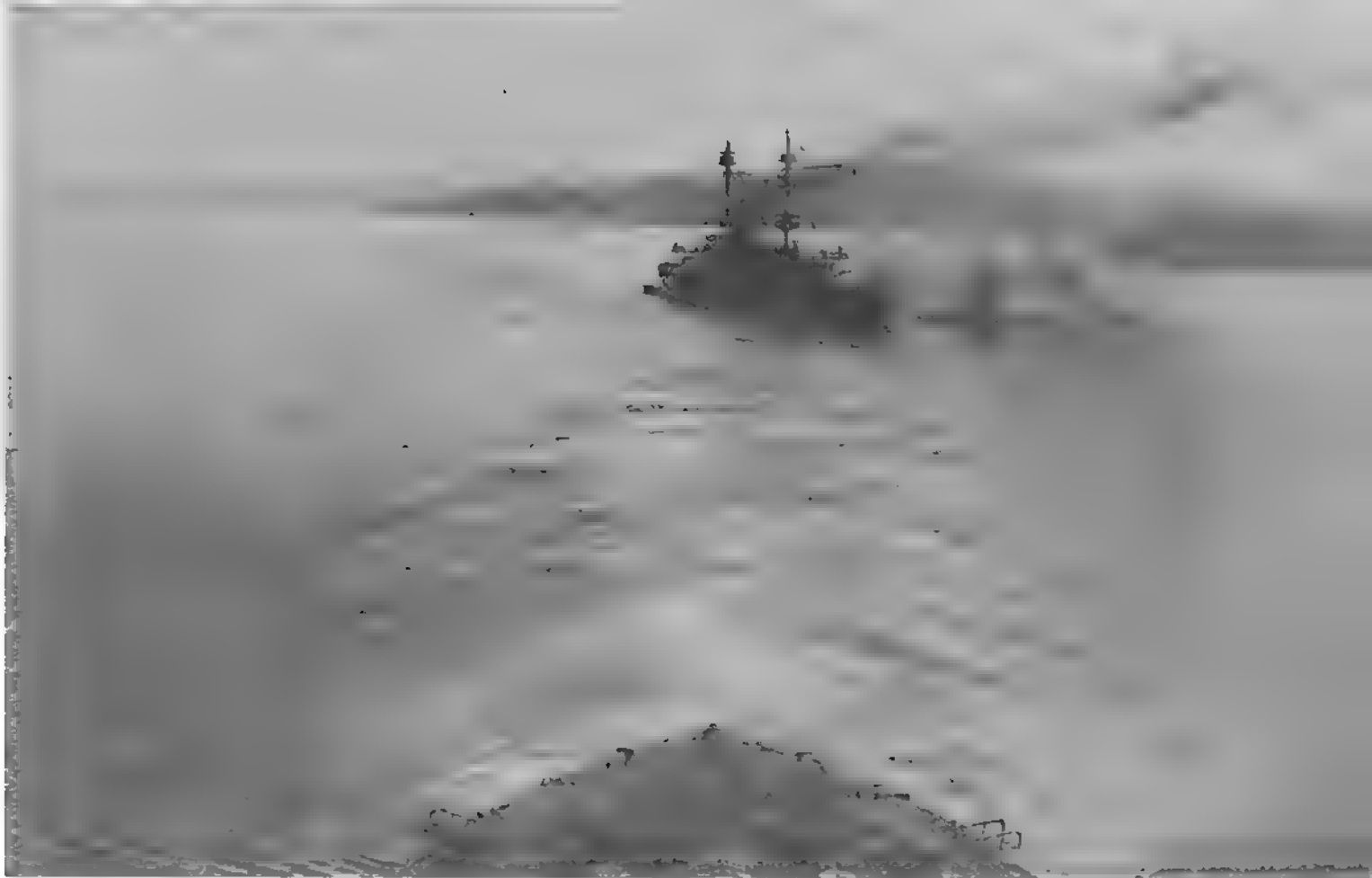
Now that we were aft, in the open, we could get a clear view of what was going on around us. Our ship had almost righted herself, although we could see how low in the water she was. Eagerly we gazed around, to see, as we hoped, a welcome destroyer or torpedo boat coming towards us. But no, not one was near us—at least, so it seemed. Suddenly a man standing right aft pointed to the entrance of the Straits,



#### A WASP OF THE FRENCH FLEET STINGS

The twenty-nine British and French destroyers that supported the landing at Gallipoli were the wasps of the fleet. While the battleships remained at sea shelling the Turkish positions, the destroyers dashed in close to the shore and poured a hot fire from their small guns in support of the infantry. This French destroyer is engaged in that useful work and, as the foam of her bow wave streaming away astern shows, she is steaming at full speed as she fires, so that she is a difficult mark for the enemy guns.

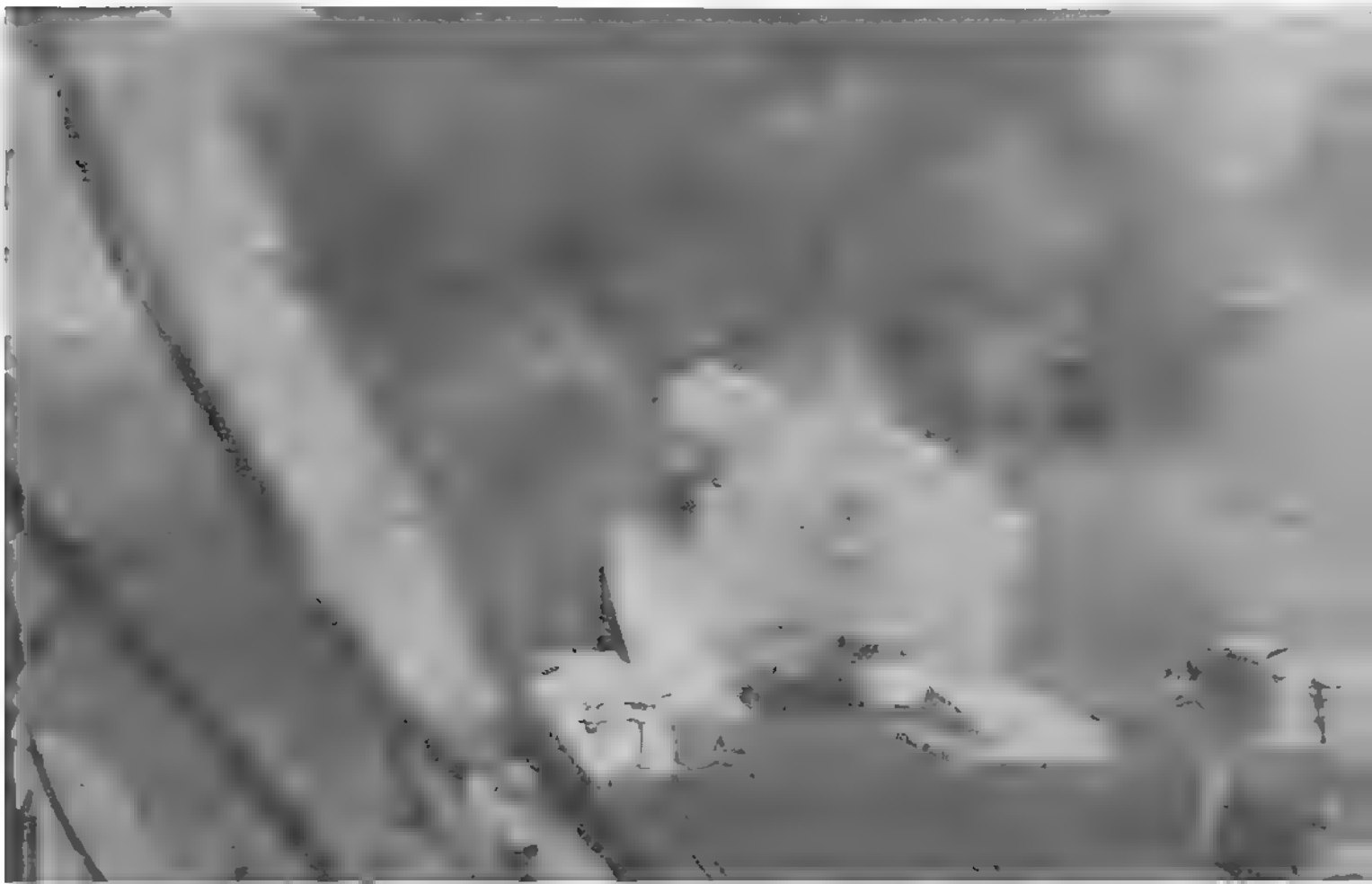
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**WHEN THE BIG GUNS BOOMED AT GALLIPOLI**

Two British battleships are seen in this page in action off the Gallipoli Peninsula. The shore with its low but steep cliffs, where the gallant deeds described in this chapter were enacted, can be discerned in both photographs. Above is the battleship Albion, fairly close in shore, with Turkish shells bursting uncomfortably close to her. Below, much farther out at sea, a 12-in. gun of H.M.S. Canopus is sending its unwelcome messengers to a Turkish battery.

*Photos, Imperial War Museum*





#### IRRESISTIBLE MET A SWIFT FATE

In this photograph the Irresistible is seen in her full splendour, a formidable giant of seeming strength and power. A battleship of 15,000 tons, she was mounted with four 12-inch and twelve 6-inch guns. How she met a swift and hapless fate, a victim of mines and Turkish gun-fire, is told in this chapter by one who was aboard the ship at the time and saw the tragedy, horror and heroism of the final scene.

*Imperial War Museum*

and we could see, far away, a destroyer or boat of some sort speeding towards us, smoke flying from her funnels—a welcome sight indeed.

**B**UT now came the worst part of our troubles. Even as I recall it, the thought of it causes me to shudder. Since the Irresistible had received her death-blow we had, almost unnoticed to us, been quietly drifting towards the Asiatic side of the Straits. The Turks ashore must have quickly realized how helpless we were, for instantly scores and scores of guns were trained upon us, and the shells began to drop all around. Truly a most uncomfortable position for us; over 600 men, helpless, forced to stand and endure this!

All the while the destroyer was getting ever nearer to us, and just as surely the Turks in the shore batteries were finding our range.

Soon the shells began to fall closer and closer, raising tremendous columns of water where they struck, some bursting and turning the water black for yards around. If ever men lived through moments of agony, we did then. These awful shells, ever growing nearer, struck terror into our hearts. He would

be an extraordinary man who would have taken no notice of them.

But the hour of our deliverance was almost at hand. Nearer and nearer came the destroyer, the *Wear*, commanded by Captain Metcalfe, and finally, while hardly decreasing her speed, she came up alongside, her propellers churning the water as she went full speed astern; and in almost less time than it takes to tell she was secure, made fast head and stern, motionless, as fine a piece of seamanship as man ever witnessed.

**O**UR captain, who all this time had never left the bridge, despite the now constant hail of shells, gave the order: "Boys and ordinary seamen, in the boat." One can imagine with what speed this order was obeyed, but through it all there was not the slightest rush of any sort. Every boy and man took his place, passing from the doomed ship to the destroyer as if he were going ashore on leave.

Followed the order, "All hands next!" Our turn at last! From a dozen different places we streamed over the side into the destroyer and safety; but not all of us were destined to be saved. At the very moment when

the last batch of men were preparing to leave the quarter-deck a shell burst amongst them.

What followed, seen by practically all the ship's company, would be too horrible to describe, but when the smoke had cleared away, on the spot where before had stood a dozen men, nothing now remained but a few mangled forms. Men already in the destroyer, forced to witness such a sight, were splashed from head to foot with the blood of their comrades!

**V**OLUNTEERS quickly scrambled aboard the ship again and carried those poor fellows in whom there still existed a spark of life aboard the destroyer. At last all who were going to leave were aboard, and the destroyer was cast off by a few brave fellows who had volunteered to stay for this purpose. With her precious freight of over 600 souls, she slipped away from the stricken ship and, gradually gaining speed, turned round and was off towards the entrance and safety.

And not a moment too soon, for even as the destroyer left the Irresistible a salvo of shells—six or eight of them—fell into the water exactly on the spot where a moment before we had been! Truly a narrower escape it would have been impossible to have had, for had the destroyer been there at that particular moment, nothing would have saved us all from destruction. For those shells would have crushed the destroyer like an eggshell!

So there we were now, speeding along at a tremendous rate. One last look we had of the poor old Irresistible. There she lay, the water now almost level with her quarter-deck, the shells, now that the batteries had found the range, bursting all over her; and on the bridge, standing there so calmly, gazing after the fast-disappearing destroyer, Captain Dent who, with ten volunteers, remained—the whole presenting such a scene as few men who saw it will ever forget.

#### MY LAST SIGHT OF MY SHIP

**T**HERE were, I should say, very few dry eyes amongst us as we gazed upon that scene, for the old Irresistible had been a good ship—none better. So she passed from our view. Never more would we see her again, the ship that had been our home for so many months.

Very soon we were all aboard the *Queen Elizabeth*, the wounded carried below, while the destroyer raced off again on a second errand of mercy. We heard later on that Captain Dent and those left aboard the Irresistible had been saved. What a cheer we gave when we heard the glad news!



# THROUGH DEATH VALLEY

## with the ANZACS

by Private Fred Fox, A.I.F.

*FROM commander-in-chief to humble private is a far cry in the military hierarchy, but—supplementing Sir Ian Hamilton's magnificent account of the Gallipoli landing—we print the narrative of an Australian who took part in the Anzac landing. How the first parties rushed ashore to almost certain death is here chronicled by one who on that fateful day was severely wounded*

ON April 23 the battalion was assembled on deck, and our commanding officer, Colonel Lyall Johnston, told us we had been selected by General Sir Ian Hamilton to storm the position selected for the Australian landing in Gallipoli. Gravely he added that we must prepare, in any event, to "do the job," and, if necessary, be sacrificed. He had inspected the positions from a cruiser, and gave us some idea of the work at hand. His statement was received with thunderous cheering. We were not only ready, we rejoiced that our chance had come. Rifles were oiled, and we saw to it that the points on our bayonets were sharp.

On Saturday, April 24, a destroyer came alongside, and our two companies, A and C, at once embarked. We sailed to the end of Mudros Bay, and boarded H.M.S. London. There was tremendous enthusiasm, and about 3 p.m. the flagship took up her position, and away we went, amid a storm of cheering from both the French and English transports and warships. We were in wonderful

spirits, and soon made friends with our naval comrades, who entertained us in the way that only Jack can do.

We had a short service on the quarter-deck, in which the chaplain spoke most kindly to us, and then, left to our own devices, we had a look round the ship. Some of the time was spent in playing cards, and there was also a good impromptu concert. As night settled down, we made ourselves as comfortable as possible and composed ourselves to sleep. All lights were, of course, extinguished. Very early on Sunday morning, April 25, we were roused, and went below, where we enjoyed a fine hot meal, prepared for us by our friend Jack. There was no excitement, only a feeling of quiet confidence over all.

We got our kits on, which consisted of 200 rounds of ammunition each, three days' rations of bully beef and biscuits, also three empty sandbags, to fill with earth when we got the opportunity. These things made up rather a heavy load, but our instructions were

### ANZAC HEROES OFF TO GALLIPOLI

This unique photograph, taken on the bow of H.M.S. London, shows some of Private Fox's comrades looking ahead full of high hope for the gallant adventure on which they are embarked. The Great Armada that sailed from Mudros on April 23 consisted of the Queen Elizabeth, flagship, eighteen British and French battleships, twelve cruisers, besides a large number of smaller craft. In this photograph the 2nd Battleship Squadron, in which the London was included, is steaming in line ahead towards Gallipoli.

Imperial War Museum



to take off the pack immediately we landed, and go for the enemy with the bayonet. We were not to fire a shot until daylight, or when ordered.

About 2 a.m. we were ordered to embark in the boats, which were drawn up alongside, with a steam pinnace to tow them. This we did without any mishap, and the beach parties belonging to the warships followed us. It was all very weird in the absolute silence, with a very, very pale moon shining. I had no idea how far we were from the shore, but we had steamed under the lee of the battleship for some time, when the order came from the captain to "carry on" on our own. Now was the critical time. I shall never forget that sight. There were three or four lines of us, with a space of perhaps 100 yards between, going stealthily and slowly towards—what?

**WE** seemed to have been hours on the way when the shape of the battleship faded away, and gradually we picked out the shores of the peninsula outlined against the sky. Most forbidding they looked, too. There was rather an amusing incident about this time. I was in the second boat, and our steering officer in the pinnace was zig-zagging a little. A naval commander in the next tow asked him several times, *sotto voce*, "to be more careful." He appeared to take no notice; and his superior roared: "For heaven's sake, steer straight, or you will spoil the whole show!" We had to stifle our mirth, but it was very funny.

#### THE ENEMY SPOTTED US

**T**HE hills, which we could now discern through the gloom, were very grim and gaunt, and we felt that we had left all protection behind. There is something very consoling when one can see a battleship. However, we set our teeth, and wriggled to get into anything approaching a comfortable position, for we were packed in the boats like sardines. No sign of life on shore could we see, and we were becoming confident that we should land unawares and surprise the Turks. Suddenly a light flashed ashore, and was visible to us for about five minutes. We knew now what to expect. The enemy had spotted us; we were in it right up to the neck. The tension was relieved, and so, I think, was every soldier.

To explain what followed, I should mention that as soon as the pinnace cast the tow off, half a dozen soldiers in each boat were told off to seize the oars, and pull as hard as they could for the shore, beaching each boat separately. We could now see the

land plainly, but the light was too bad to distinguish any movement ashore. We were about thirty yards away when the pinnace cast off. No sooner were the oars in position, than—bang! from the right came the shrapnel. The Turks on the cliff and in the trenches were pouring forth a murderous fire from rifle and machine-gun. The range was point-blank, and how they missed any of us is hard to say.

**N**O orders were given—or wanted—then. Every man not disabled at once jumped overboard. I handed my rifle to a sailor to hold, and went over into the water up to the armpits. The poor fellow was handing my rifle back to me when a shrapnel shell burst just overhead, and killed him. It was a terrible time. Under the water was a network of wires, and we were slipping and tripping about frightfully. A comrade of mine went under; I grabbed him up, and after a struggle we managed to get ashore. This little incident was repeated all along the beach.

Believe me, the noise was beyond imagination; all hell seemed to be let loose. We were shivering with the cold, but we wanted blood now. Off went the packs, the steel rang as we fixed bayonets, and, forming into some sort of a line, up the cliff we rushed, regardless of the rifle or machine-gun fire. Nothing could stop these mad Australians now.

"Advance, Australia!" went up the battle-cry. Cooeeing and swearing, tripping and sliding, we were in among those Turks, and there was not one alive in their first line of trenches a quarter of an hour after our landing, on this amazing and glorious Sunday morning of April 25, 1915.

No quarter was given, no prisoners were taken. Day was breaking quickly now, and after the first terrific rush we had an opportunity to have a look round. We kept in the captured trenches, which were excellent, stored with food and ammunition, and saw a sight which gladdened our hearts—dozens of transports steaming in, full of troops. Destroyers, too; and last, but not least, "Our Lizzie." What a glorious cheer went up! It was great to have done this.

But I must continue. The shrapnel and the snipers were still playing havoc with our landing parties, and the poor fellows were falling fast.

Such heroism as those lads displayed may have been equalled—it can never have been surpassed. It is good to be British. Some of our boats were adrift with the whole of the crew out of action. There were lots of our comrades lying about, too, in all sorts of positions, dead and wounded.

Our medical officer, Captain Brennan, and his assistants were working like Trojans, but all they could do was to give the poor fellows quick first-aid, and leave them. All were heroes on that day. Our commanding officer came up, passed a word of praise and good cheer, and the Brigadier was highly elated, too.


#### MEN DROPPED LIKE NINEPINS

**A**LL was the work of a few minutes, taking longer to tell than it did to happen. But stern work was still before us. It was now our part to beat the enemy's counter-attack. We hurried down the side of the ravine, enemy shrapnel and snipers dealing out death all the time, and gradually, as we got into line, the fire grew hotter and hotter. Men dropped like ninepins, and, being in thick scrub, we could not see the enemy.

It was ideal country for defence, but all against attack. This ravine was at once called Death Valley, a name that has stuck to it. It was a terribly hot day, and tried our tempers sorely. In fact, we saw red. We were fighting more or less in bunches of three or four, always advancing. Some of us detached ourselves for sniping, and I swear beat the enemy at their own game.

The firing was deadly, and during the early morning caused a tremendous lot of casualties, and no mercy was shown. Suddenly the fire on us slackened a little; the enemy's attention was partly diverted to a hydroplane from the battleships which was endeavouring to get the range. A tremendous amount of ammunition was wasted on the flying machine, but it sailed serenely on, and shortly after its disappearance we were greatly cheered by the shots from the ships firing over our heads. We were now getting a bit of our own back.

**WE** could not see it, of course, but were cheered by messages which said that the Turkish reinforcements which were being hurried up were suffering terribly. We had no chance to dig ourselves in; we had to push the enemy from the beach to give our main body a chance. So on we went, never firing unless we could be sure of a result. Occasionally we got into them with the bayonet, but they had already had their lesson, and generally cleared out when we were close to them. If they had been given a moment's respite we should have suffered more, and no doubt have been compelled to give way. As long as the Turks were on the run, our reinforcements with ammunition, picks, and other impedimenta, had a sporting chance, for once they had passed the



enfilading shrapnel fire on the beach, they had a comparatively easy time before reaching the firing-line. It was terrible, though, to see one's friends falling. We were comrades all, rendering first aid whenever possible, and our padre was as brave as a lion.

OUR officers were great, too. They were equipped exactly the same as ourselves, but only carried a switch, and to see Major Drake Brockman, my company officer, smoking a cigarette and calmly walking up and down the line, was something to inspire at the time, and to be remembered so long as memory lasts.

Our brave old Colonel Lyall Johnston was as cool as a cucumber, cheering us all by his wonderful sangfroid. We called him "Tipperary," and he was proud of his name and his boys.

It was now about twelve noon, and we must have advanced a couple of miles. The firing-line now was very much strengthened, our 1st and 2nd Brigades having by this time got a lot of their men on shore. An Indian mountain battery had also arrived, and, with the guns of the battleships, was giving us great assistance. The earth fairly shook with the explosions when the big guns were fired, and the air was alive with bullets zip-zipping over our heads.

Our advance was so rapid that the Turkish batteries found it rather hard to locate us with their shrapnel; in

**BOATLOADS OF BRAVE MEN ON A GALLIPOLI BEACH**  
In all the history of the war there is no finer record of heroism than that of the Australians' ill-fated assault at Gallipoli in 1915. Here is a unique photograph, taken by Captain Milligan of the A.I.F. at 7.30 a.m. on the morning of April 25, showing men of the 4th Battalion landing. From a placid, sunlit sea the Anzacs moved to a beach where death awaited many. Coolly standing in the foreground are some officers, including Brigadier-General H. N. MacLaurie of the 1st Infantry Brigade. Captain Milligan was killed shortly after he had taken this photograph.

fact, in one case we were right on them before they were aware of it, and we took three howitzer guns, bayoneting the gunners. Losses or no losses, on we went. It was just great.

About this time I found a small knoll, and, being rather fatigued, two comrades and I sat down for a smoke and a bit of biscuit. I remember thinking what a glorious day it was. I could hear the birds singing, and I was wondering how it could be that men should be murdering each other so on God's good Sunday, when one of my friends dropped—a sniper had spotted him. He simply sank down—dead.

OFF we rushed again. The fire was getting hotter and hotter. I and two others were on the extreme left flank, and making for another rush, when a shrapnel shell burst right overhead, killing the soldier on my left, and hitting me fair in the right knee. I thought the earth had hit me. Over and over I went, and for a while the pain was excruciating. I immediately charged the magazine of my rifle, and started pulling myself on my stomach to the beach, a distance of quite three miles. Losing a lot of blood, and in great

pain, I persevered. I was a fine mark for the snipers on the left flank, and my tunic and breeches were riddled with bullets, but the little cherub that sits up above was good to me. I shall always remember that crawl in the terribly hilly scrub.

About half-way down I fell into a trench, and became unconscious. However, two of my comrades found me, and carried me pick-a-back down to the beach. They were splendid chaps. I certainly owe my life to them, for had they not found me I should have bled to death, or perhaps worse. My knee was dressed; I was laid on a stretcher, and placed in a punt.

All that night it rained in torrents, but I knew no more until I was hoisted aboard the transport on Monday morning. I had had a lot of pain, but was quite happy. We did what we had to do, and I was proud to belong to the Australian Volunteer Contingent.

The doctors told me I should have a stiff knee for the rest of my days as a souvenir of that terrible and yet glorious Sunday when the Australians landed on Gallipoli. To have lived through such a day and to be alive to tell the story is a sheer miracle.

# DAUNTLESS in the FACE of DEATH

## I Saw the Heroes of 'River Clyde'

by Major A. H. Mure, T.D.

**MAJOR MURE** had a spectator's view of the immortal landing of the troops from the old collier, the *River Clyde*, at 'V' Beach from the deck of a transport close in to the shore. Here he pays tribute to the almost incredible heroism of the troops who wrote this most glorious page of our military history

**O**N April 25, 1915, the fleet was bombarding the Asiatic side of the Dardanelles, where the French were drawing Turkish fire by making a feint of landing. On that side there was a long cliff with the usual row of Eastern houses on the top. It was extraordinary to see a house crumple and topple down. The Russian battleship [Askold], with its five funnels, christened by Tommy the "Packet of Woodbines," did great execution.

What looked to be a cottage was built on a small promontory jutting out from the edge of the cliff. For hours the little building defied the gunners, and seemed almost to mock the best marksmanship in Europe, so long did it stand unscathed. At last a shell landed right into it, and down it came at the first touch, exactly like a castle of playing cards, such as you and I used to build years ago. The whole ship cheered vociferously. . . . Its end was unmistakable. When it had toppled to its doom, we turned our attention to graver matters of battle. Krithia, well to our north, was ablaze, and Achi Baba, just beyond, was getting a generous share of the "heavies."

**W**E could not tell how the day was going. Indescribable noise we could hear, indescribable flame and confusion we could see, indescribable carnage could infer, but we could not piece together or interpret the awful confusion of detail. There was a green field to the left on the top of the cliff, and we could see men rushing across it, then coming back, then advancing again, as if a stiff fight were going on. Towards Sedd el Bahr there seemed to be no progress, and we, watching and waiting, began to feel nervous and imagined that all was not well. . . .

It was evident by this time that a landing had been effected, though not so successful a landing as had been anticipated. But we had begun. We were doing something—the rattle of

musketry told that. It became more pronounced as the evening wore on, sharper, quicker, more distraught, as if thousands of death-dice were being tossed feverishly by the nervous hands of a multitude of desperate gamblers.

I don't think many slept that night, and sharp at dawn every man of us was up and astir to see—if he could—what was happening. . . .

An hour later, thrall'd and breathless, I was watching the first big infantry charge I had ever seen. It was a glorious and terrible sight, and I felt as it looked—fearful and exultant. The infantry pushed and tore through the village of Sedd el Bahr up to the fort belching fire and death from the cliff beyond.

The blood danced in our veins, as we leaned and looked, our souls fighting with those men struggling in the thick of carnage.

Their bayonets flashed in the dancing sunlight, and as the men rattled on, bleeding, dying, yet persisting, conquering, the glittering sheen they threw before them and about them scintillated like a sea of liquid, burnished steel, more alive than the molten sunlight it mocked and outshone, throwing great swathes of terrible searchlight for yards in front of our straining, suffering infantry, and for yards on either side of them. And we could hear the men shouting, "Go on, lads; go on, you devils! Give them hell!" and cries much more vitriolic, less episcopal.

### TORTURE AND SLAUGHTER

**"G**O on, lads"—nothing very Homeric in that! Ah! wait and hear—hear it from a thousand British throats, when the day runs red and the fight rises and falls in awful sheets and sweeps of torture and slaughter, necks knotted, backs strained, eyes and hearts bursting, breasts heaving and panting, wounds unheeded, death mocked and defied. The fort was taken. We saw our men

stagger and sway with fatigue and the recoil of mighty work done and accomplished. Then they recovered, threw off their brief relaxation (it had been but an instant), shook themselves into position and re-formed. . . . Lieut.-Colonel Doughty-Wylie of the General Staff had gone ashore to direct operations. He had to lead the assault, and leading he fell, just when the fort was as good as taken. And for a monument to a man and a soldier the fort was given his name.

In the afternoon we received a signal that ammunition was needed, and presently a pinnacle came along with a lighter in tow. Then there was turmoil. Every officer itched and clamoured to go. But O.C. Troops was on board, and he went himself, and took my second-in-command with him. I silently consigned them both to a place which, after all, was probably cool and comfortable compared with the spot where they landed.

**T**HEY both came back safely towards sunset, and we gathered about them like schoolboys round a toffee-box. But they wouldn't talk. I believe they couldn't. Wilson said that "it was indescribable," and that was every word I could get out of him. About 1 a.m. next morning still more ammunition was wanted, and my chance had come.

I set off in a pinnacle towing two ammunition lighters, and headed for the *River Clyde*, an old collier that had been turned into a sort of ferry-boat for troops, to carry them from troopships to shore. Great open spaces had been cut in her side at her between-decks, and lower down platforms and runs had been built that men might rush from her quickly when landing under accurate fire. Encased machine-guns stood on her fore-castle that she might, when desirable, give the Turks fire for fire. She had now been beached, purposely, as near shore as was practicable.

**F**ROM her to the shore ran a rough bridge of boats, lighters and miscellaneous small craft, across which the men had to crawl and slide to the shore. This bridge had been built at a terrible cost, with a disregard of death as glorious as anything in the history of war.

When the *River Clyde* was beached, twenty-five launches packed with men slipped ahead of her, and the men in them—knowing perfectly the nature and the extent of their danger—began to make the required bridge, getting small boats into position and securely moored, working from the *River Clyde* to the beach. Soon after she grounded, the





### **TWO THOUSAND HEROES WERE IN HER HOLD**

Three stages in the almost inconceivably heroic story of the River Clyde told in this chapter are shown in the photographs in this page. Above she is lying in Mudros Harbour being fitted out for the immortal landing. The great openings in her side through which the men were to leave the ship have already been cut. Right is her fore deck after the landing, showing the terrible damage done by enemy shells to the superstructure, evidence of the terrific fire to which she was subjected. Below she is seen a few days after the landing. The great doors, through which more than 2,000 men passed, are still open, the gangway along which they went and the pontoons which made a landing stage are still in place.

*Imperial War Museum*





#### SHAMBLES IN THE TURKISH SUN

To reach this meagre, crumpled place, the village of Sedd el Bahr, British soldiers worked, struggled and rushed forward beneath a blazing sun and amid a fury of crushing fire. Death took a frightful toll on that terrible April day in 1915, yet immediately others poured into the carnage to live or die and leave an undying tale of superlative, poignant heroism.

*Imperial War Museum*

Turks opened fire on the heroic little bridge of boats, finished half-way or more to the shore, bombarding it from the ruined castle of Sedd el Bahr, from the higher town, and from the splendidly fortified and magnificently manned and munitioned hill that stretched across the bay. . . .

The waiting troops on the big ship were more protected, for the River Clyde was fortified, too, and had many contrivances of defence, but the little boats were naked and helpless. The Turks are computed to have sent from five to twelve thousand shots a minute into that devoted band of men. Not one man flinched. But most of them died. As a boatload perished, men rushed down the gangway of the River Clyde and carried on.

A man who lived ten minutes under that Turkish fire seemed to have a charmed life. Most dropped within four minutes. But before they dropped they worked—ah, how they worked while they yet lived! Each did his small vital bit; and when he lurched bleeding into his sea grave, a

comrade, newly come, snatched up his job until he, too, died, to be succeeded by yet another British soldier. . . .

The holocaust was hideous, but the object for which the men died was fulfilled. The bridge was completed and the Turks could not prevent it. A Turkish officer, our prisoner later, swore by Allah that it was the finest thing he ever saw, and ten times braver than he would have credited of any man, Christian or Mussulman.

It was over this blood-cemented bridge that Lieut.-Colonel Doughty-Wylie had led his men, to storm, through indescribable difficulties, the ruins of Sedd el Bahr. And it was over it that I now went, as cautiously as possible, leaving my pinnace beside the River Clyde, and scrambling as best I could from boat to boat. The moon had risen by this time, and the beastly evidences of the relentless conflict were thick about; you could not fail to see them clearly, and they looked all the

ghastlier in the theatrical limelight of the Orient moon.

The heroism of the troops who built that bridge of boats, in daylight, under tremendous, hellish fire, must have been superlative. It beggars all words, and I will attempt none. But we thought of them and our thoughts were eloquent. For we found it no small thing to pick our way, at our own pace, the Turks temporarily inactive, over those awaying, bobbing craft. To go over them in full marching order must have been a difficult feat in itself, let alone building the way as they went, doing it under shot and shell.

On reaching the beach, I clambered over the lighters to see where the ammunition was to be dumped first, and began to slip and slide all over the place. I bent down to examine the wood on which I was skidding, and I saw—well, it wasn't water that was making me slide about! It was something thicker than water.

On the shore I found a very tired-looking assistant-beachmaster. I remarked, "You seem to have had a pretty thick time." He answered not a word. He only looked at me. It was enough. I shall remember that look while I live.

# 'MY OWN DARK HOURS'

## As Commander-in-Chief at Gallipoli

by General Sir Ian Hamilton,  
G.C.B., G.C.M.G., D.S.O.



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### GENERAL AT GALLIPOLI

The onerous duty of being Commander-in-Chief of the expeditionary force engaged in the tragic Gallipoli adventure fell to General Sir Ian Hamilton, seen here as he was at the time of the campaign.

ON April 24 the Queen Elizabeth anchored off Tenedos just before 4 p.m., lay outside the roadstead. Close by us was the British Fleet with an armada of transports, all at anchor. As we were closing up to them we spotted a floating mine which must have been passed touch-and-go during the night by all those warships and troopships. A good omen, surely, but not one of them fell foul of the death that lurks in that ugly horned devil—not dead itself, but very much alive, for it answered a shot from one of our three-pounders with the dull roar and spitting of fire and smoke bred for our benefit by the kindly German Kultur.

Our Queen Elizabeth chose the cold, grey hour of 4 a.m. on April 25 to make her war toilette. By 4.15 she had sunk the lady and put on the man-of-war. She was cleared for action now, and so are we.

If this is a queer start for me, so it is also for de Robeck, the commanding admiral. A fleet lies in the grip of its admiral like a platoon in the hands of a subaltern. The admiral sees, speaks the executive word and the whole fleet moves; not as with us, each commander carrying out the order in his own way, but each captain steaming, firing, retiring to the letter of the signal. In the Navy, the man at the gun, the man at the helm, the man sending up shells in the hoist is an automaton, unless indeed the gear goes wrong and he has to use his wits to put it right again. With us the infantry scout may have to decide whether to open fire, to lie low or to fall back; whether to

bring on a battle or avoid it. But the Fleet today is working like an army. The ships are widely scattered, each one on its own, except in so far as wireless may serve, and that is why I say Admiral de Robeck is working in a way just as strange to him as mine is to me. My station is up in the conning tower with de Robeck. The conning tower is a circular metal chamber, like a big cooking pot. Here we are, all eyes, like potatoes in the cooking pot, trying to peep through a slit where the lid is raised a few inches, *ad hoc*, as these blasted politicians like to say. My staff are not with me in this holy of holes, but are stowed away in steel towers or jammed into 6-inch batteries.

At 4.30 a.m. we were off Sedd el Bahr. All quiet and grey. Thence we steamed for Gaba Tepe, and midway, about five o'clock, heard a very heavy fire from Helles, behind us. Now we are off Gaba Tepe.

Day was just breaking over the jagged hills; the sea was glassy smooth. The landing was in full swing. Shrapnel was bursting over the water, the patter of musketry; the machine-guns spluttered. Would we be out of it? No, not one of us; not for five hundred years stuffed full of dullness and routine.

### WAVE AFTER WAVE DISAPPEAR

By 5.35 the rattle of small arms died down; 4,000 fighting men had been landed, boatloads still making for the land, swarms trying to straighten themselves out along the shore, other groups digging and hacking down the brushwood. They did not look bigger than ants. God, one would think, cannot see them at all, or He would put a stop to this sort of panorama. And yet it would be a pity if He missed it, for these fellows have been worth the making. They are not charging up into this Sari Bair range for money or by compulsion. They fight for love—all the way from the Southern Cross for love of the Old Country and of

liberty. Wave after wave of the little ants press up and disappear. We lose sight of them the moment they lie down. Bravo! Every man on our great ship longs to be with them. But the main battle called. The Admiral was keen to take me when and where the need might most arise, so we turned south and steamed slowly back along the coast to Cape Helles.

OPPOSITE Krithia came another great moment. We have made good the landing; it is a fact. I have to repeat the word to myself several times—"fact, fact, fact"—so as to be sure I am awake and standing here looking at live men through a long telescope. The thing seems unreal, as though we were in a dream, instead of on a battleship. To see words working themselves out upon the ground; to watch thoughts move over the ground as fighting men . . .

Both battalions, the Plymouth Royal



### TWENTY-THREE YEARS AFTER

Among the few great figures of the war who are alive today is General Sir Ian Hamilton. During a long life he saw much fighting and adventure, but no memories of his can be more clearly etched nor moving than those of Gallipoli.

Marines and the K.O.S.B.'s, had climbed the high cliff without loss—so it was signalled. There is no firing; the Turks have made themselves scarce. Nothing to show danger or stress; only parties of our men struggling up the sandy precipice by zigzags, carrying munitions and glittering kerosene tins of water. Through the telescope we can now make out a number of our fellows in groups along the crest of the cliff, probably smoking. This promises great results to our arms—not the smoking, for I hope that won't last long, but the enemy's surprise. In spite of Egypt and the Egyptian Gazette, we have brought off our tactical *coup*. The bulk of the Turks are not at Gaba Tepe; here, at "Y," there are none at all.

If the Australians get through to Mal Tepe the whole Turkish Army on

the Peninsula will be done in. If this "Y" Beach lot press their advantage they may cut off the enemy troops on the toe of the Peninsula.

Braithwaite [General Sir Walter Braithwaite, G.C.B., Sir Ian Hamilton's Chief of Staff] has suggested that the Naval Division who are making a feint against the Bulair lines might be put in here to reinforce at "Y." The idea appeals to me very strongly, because I have been all along most keen on the "Y" Beach plan, my own special child; and this would be to make the most of it. But, until the main battle develops more clearly I must not commit the only troops I have in hand as my own reserve.

At "X" Beach the foreshore and cliffs have been made good without much loss, though there is a hot fight going on just south of it. But fresh

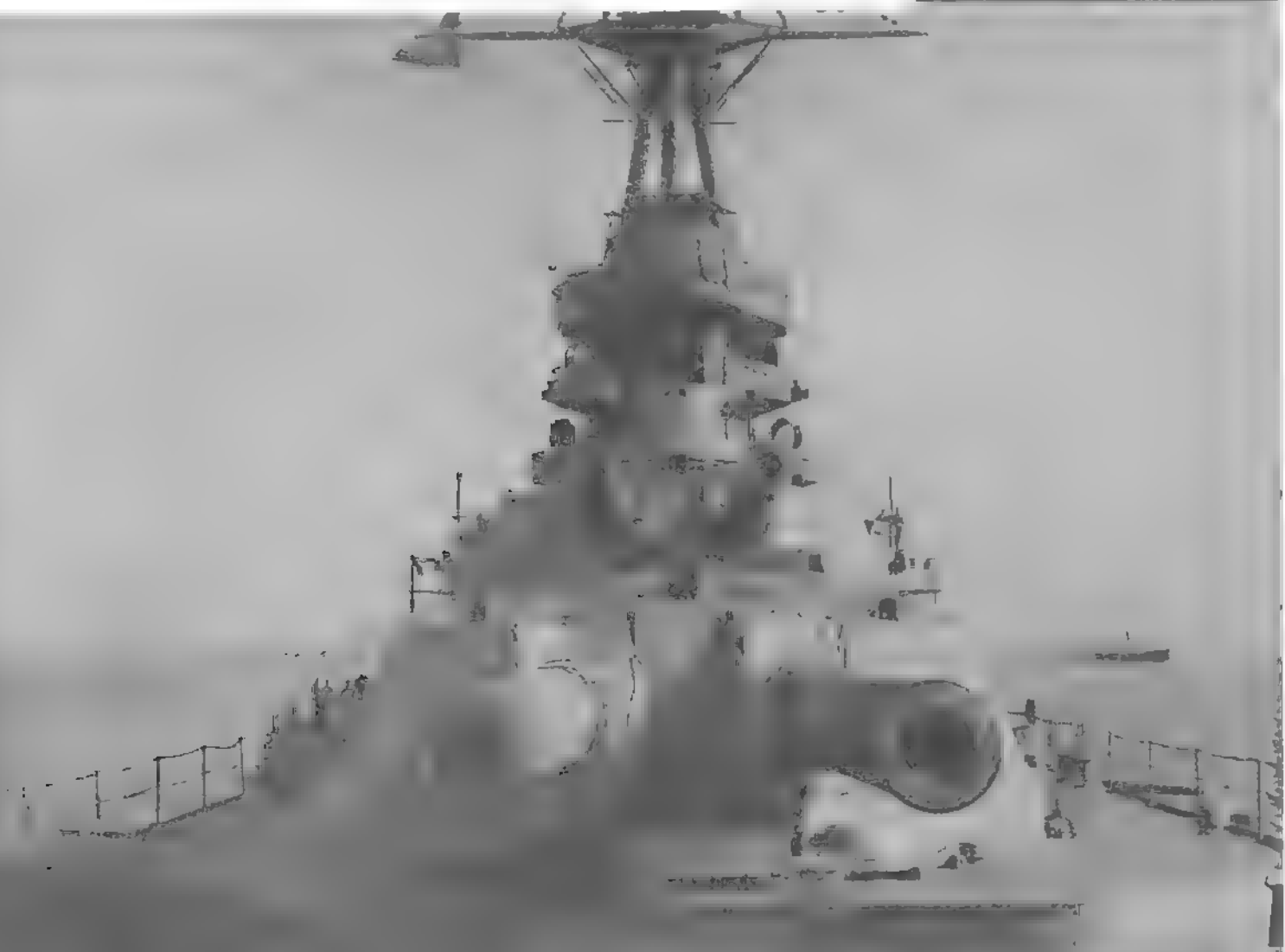
troops will soon be landing—so far so good. Farther round, at "W" Beach, another lodgment has been effected; very desperate and bloody, we are told by the Naval Beachmaster; and indeed we can see some of the dead; but the Lancashire Fusiliers are in possession, though we don't seem yet to have

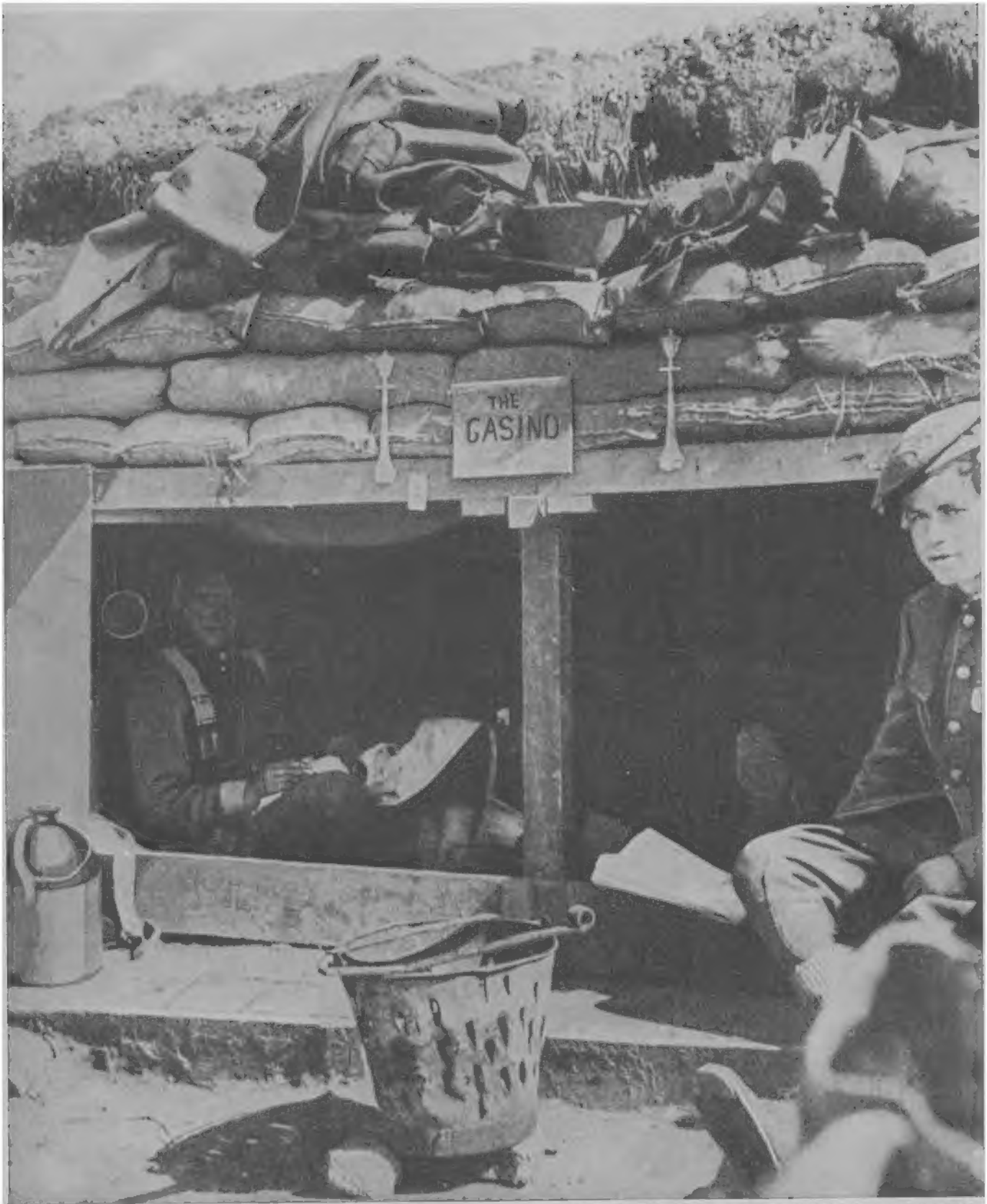


#### THE ADMIRAL AND HIS FLAGSHIP'S 'LOUDSPEAKERS'

On the right is Vice-Admiral Sir John de Robeck, who commanded the Allied fleet at Gallipoli and flew his flag in the Queen Elizabeth. Below is the fore turret of the flagship carrying four of her eight 15-in. guns. No other ship in the fleet carried such heavy guns, the Queen Elizabeth being the first British ship to be so armed. Their terrific roar as they shelled the enemy positions during the landings and subsequent attacks was a heartening sound to the troops ashore.

*Photos Russell and Imperial War Museum.*





**'A BETTER HOLE' THAN THE FRONT LINE**

This photograph shows a support trench in the Bois Grenier sector in the spring of 1915. Two enemies need no longer be feared—they are mud and rain—for trenches have improved vastly upon those shown in page 284, and these men of the 2nd Battalion Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders are making themselves as comfortable as circumstances permit. They have a bucket fire, and newspapers, while the parapet is convenient for piling equipment superfluous in the welcome sunshine. "The Casino," as their temporary home is named, is therefore not so bad a hole for the moment.

*Imperial War Museum*





**THROUGH A HAIL OF LEAD TO LASTING GLORY — 'THEIR NAME LIVETH FOR EVERMORE'**

This illustration from a diorama in the Imperial War Museum is a complete reconstruction from official sources of the scene during the landing from the River Clyde, one of the greatest displays of indomitable bravery in the whole history of the human race. On the forecastle can be seen a pile of sandbags, part of the "many contrivances of defence" that Major Mure mentions in this chapter. Between the ship and the shore is the "blood-cemented bridge" of lighters and small boats over which Lieut.-Colonel Doughty-Wylie so gallantly led his men, only to be mown down by the hail of rifle and machine-gun fire from behind the barbed wire defences just above the beach. The immortal 2,000 were drawn from the Dublin Fusiliers, the Munster Fusiliers, the 2nd Hampshires, the Anson Battalion and the West Riding Field Company, Royal Engineers.

## Leaves from the Editor's Note-Book

(Continued from page 11 of this wrapper)

to August 28, 1914, and suggests that another thing which should be remembered is the great heat, which might well set up a mirage effect on those long, flat Belgian plains, particularly in the evening light. Moreover, the presence on the line of retreat of the Scots Greys, who, as we know, painted their light-coloured horses with permanganate of potash to reduce their visibility, combined with the mirage effect of their apparent riding upside-down in the far distance, was, he suggests, quite enough to convey to men in nearly the last stages of exhaustion an impression of spectral horsemen. Be this as it may, effects and impressions of this sort would certainly tend to deepen the after-effects of such an excellent story as Mr. Machen's, although, as he says, it was not actually published until the end of September in that year.

**O**UR correspondent throws out the extremely interesting hint that the other myth which Mr. Machen demolishes so easily and, to my mind, completely—that of the fabulous Russian hosts who were supposed to be travelling in numberless troop trains through all parts of England—may have had a very slight and genuine basis in fact. His information is that about a thousand Russian reservists, who happened to be in America when the war broke out, were collected, equipped, and sent to Liverpool in September 1914. Thence they proceeded by troop train to Avonmouth, and so to France, where, incidentally, they are said to have given the French quite a lot of trouble. He thinks that this, if it were a fact, was quite enough to start the whole story, and I must say that when one considers how quickly such yarns get spread abroad and how ridiculously they may become exaggerated, I think it quite possible that some such relatively insignificant fact may have produced the myth of the colossal Russian reinforcements. These are questions and arguments to which no final conclusion is possible; but they undoubtedly possess a perpetual attraction to the human mind.

**M**ANY have been the queries and questions that I have already received. Most of these I have replied to direct, but two of them I think are well worth comment on this page. Mr. W. J. Hannington, an Ex-Staff Sergeant-Major, 12th Royal Lancers, who was attached to the Northumberland Hussars, asks me—rather unnecessarily, perhaps—if we are going “to perpetuate the old story of the London Scottish Territorials being first in action.” This is a matter which had previously come to my notice, for it is a comparatively old bone of contention. As my correspondent says, the Official History of the War gives the Oxfordshire Hussars as being the first Territorials “to come into collision with the enemy.” But there seems no doubt that the first to come into real action were the Northumberland Hussars, who suffered a patrol ambush on October 10th and another patrol action on the 15th, the regiment as a whole being engaged with a German cyclist battalion on the 19th, and being again in action in Polygon Wood on October 23rd and 24th.

**T**HE London Scottish, of course, as we noted in Part 6 of **THE GREAT WAR: I WAS THERE!** in connexion with the most excellent chapter by my old friend Herbert de Hamel, were the first London Territorial Battalion to engage the

enemy, the date of their action near Messines being October 31, when, as was told in that very vivid chapter, “they covered themselves with imperishable glory.” There is always some confusion in these claims to priority; but I think there is now no room for doubt so far as these two Territorial units are concerned. Incidentally Mr. de Hamel is justifiably rather proud of the fact that as a sergeant on the reserve when there was a full complement of active list sergeants, he voluntarily reverted to private in order to get to France with the first battalion of the London Scottish. In the note under his portrait in Part 6 we omitted the rather important words “on the reserve” and I make this note lest any unthinking person should imagine the reversion cast any reflection upon his capacity as a sergeant.

**I**N the next letter for comment we leave the Western Front. Mr. Geal tells me that his father, who is still alive, was a member of the 29th Division which made the unforgettable landing from the River Clyde and other transports at Gallipoli on Sunday, April 25, 1915. His father was among the first ashore, and was happily and miraculously unhurt. He knows another man who was the last man to get ashore from the shambles of the River Clyde, and is very anxious that there should be in our work a clear and correct account of this landing. Many that he has read are incorrect—even the B.B.C., he says, failed to mention the English troops on the River Clyde in their 21st anniversary broadcast. Also, every picture and illustration that he has ever seen is a misrepresentation of the actuality, and both he and his son are looking forward with interest to see how this, one of the greatest epics of the whole war, is presented in our pages.

**N**OW, I cannot promise, of course, that in an anthology such as our work is, every important detail of an action or a battle will be described. The essential feature of **THE GREAT WAR: I WAS THERE!** is that it presents only accounts and stories written by the men who were actually there. Generally, we can give only one account of any particular action, and as that must be seen through the eyes of one man it is obvious that it cannot be as complete and comprehensive as an historical account written after consulting all the documents available. But our method does give not only the immense human interest and vividness of the eye-witness story, but an actuality that no pedantically accurate historian can ever convey. I feel sure that when Mr. Geal reads the account in the present Part by Major Mure, who was actually on one of the transports alongside the River Clyde and saw both the landing and the fighting afterwards on the beach and the cliffs, he will be well satisfied.

**S**O far as illustrations are concerned, of course, Mr. Geal may be equally well satisfied. As I have already mentioned in this Note-Book, illustrations to this work are definitely, with the rarest exceptions, photographic, and although the photographer cannot select as the Academy painter can, and vary the emphasis according to the idea which he wishes to present, the photographer again shares with the eye-witness writer that immediacy and accuracy which no painter can equal.

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